



Professor Tan Tai Yong (left), 61, will take over the helm from founding SUSS president Cheong Hee Kiat, 68, on Jan 1 next year.

## SUSS to get new president next year

**Amelia Teng**  
Education Correspondent

The Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) will have a new president from Jan 1 next year.

Professor Tan Tai Yong, 61, will take over from the school's current founding president, Professor Cheong Hee Kiat, 68, who has been at the helm of the university since 2005.

In a statement yesterday, SUSS said: "Under Professor Cheong's leadership in the past 17 years, the university grew from strength to strength (from 1,500 students to over 17,000 students today) in fulfilling its social mission as a university serving Singaporeans.

"His passion for lifelong learning and doing good through making education accessible to people from all walks of life is almost synonymous with the growth story of SUSS."

Prof Tan was previously president and professor of humanities (history) at Yale-NUS College.

He played an active role in shaping the college's academic programme, including its common curriculum, and integrating academic and residential life. He has also held various leadership and advisory roles at the National University of Singapore and several cultural, historical and research organisations.

Prof Tan, who received his doctorate from Cambridge University, is also honorary chairman of the National Museum of Singapore and co-chair of the Founders' Memorial Committee.

He served as a Nominated Member of Parliament from 2014 to 2015, and was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Silver) in 2009, and the Public Service Medal in 2020.

Prof Tan told *The Straits Times* yesterday that his new role will require a "dramatic switch of mind", from leading a liberal arts college of about 1,000 students to heading a larger university that is "inclusive" and focuses on continuous and applied learning, as well as social science research.

Some areas he will be paying greater attention to are creating good career paths for faculty, building on research in applied social science, and fund-raising efforts.

"The good thing is that the university is really forging ahead, and I just have to catch on, ride on this momentum and try to steer it as best as I can," he said.

Mrs Mildred Tan, chairman of the SUSS board of trustees, said that SUSS will benefit greatly from Prof Tan's "vast experience and deep expertise".

Thanking Prof Cheong for his leadership, she said: "His pioneering achievements over the years, the resulting recognition of SUSS as an autonomous university and the excellent results of our graduate employment surveys are testaments to the admirable contributions by his outstanding leadership. We are grateful for his service and unwavering support."

ateng@sph.com.sg