

NUS welcomes President Tharman as 11th chancellor

His contributions to the education system, citizens' lifelong learning hailed at event

Anjali Raguraman
Correspondent

President Tharman Shanmugaratnam's contributions to the Republic's education system and citizens' lifelong learning were underscored by National University of Singapore (NUS) president Tan Eng Chye on Jan 4, as he welcomed Mr Tharman as the university's 11th chancellor.

Mr Tharman has had "a remarkable career" as an economist, political leader and respected policy-maker on the global stage, said Professor Tan, and NUS had the opportunity to work with him when he was education minister from 2003 to 2008.

"During his term, and through

his subsequent appointments in public office, he has shaped Singapore's education landscape by introducing multiple pathways, and recognised diverse skills and talents to achieve a broader and more flexible system of meritocracy," said Prof Tan.

He noted Mr Tharman's involvement at the start of the SkillsFuture initiative, which provides lifelong learning and skills development opportunities for Singaporeans. Mr Tharman chaired the SkillsFuture Council when it was formed in 2014, while he was serving as deputy prime minister.

Prof Tan added that more than a decade later, many Singaporeans are engaging in lifelong learning, and the range and options available have expanded dramatically.

In 2023, more than 39,000 training spots have been taken up at the NUS School of Continuing and Lifelong Education, said Prof Tan.

The school, which was launched in 2016, promotes lifelong learning opportunities by providing working adults with pathways to acquire new skills and qualifications.

NUS is also one of five partners appointed by the Infocomm Media Development Authority to develop government-funded courses in generative artificial intelligence, software engineering, and cloud and mobility capabilities.

More than 70 guests, including Mr Tharman's wife, Ms Jane Ittogi, and Second Minister for Education Maliki Osman, attended the event at the NUS University Cultural Centre.

The chancellor's post at NUS, according to its Constitution, is filled by the president of Singapore.

Mr Tharman said in a statement that NUS has grown alongside Sin-



President Tharman Shanmugaratnam receiving the Elements of the NUS Crest memento from Mr Hsieh Fu Hua, chairman of the NUS Board of Trustees, at the NUS University Cultural Centre on Jan 4. ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

gapore since the university's founding in 1905, contributing to both country and society.

"Its commitment towards scholarship, enterprise and serving the needs of the community is central to our vision of a thriving and socially cohesive future," he added.

"Educational reform has been one of my lifelong priorities, and I aim to continue engaging this sector in various ways – including in my new appointment as the 11th chancellor of NUS," Mr Tharman also said in an Instagram story.

Mr Tharman takes over the role from his predecessor, Madam Halimah Yacob, just as the university breaks for the first time into the top 10 institutions globally.

NUS is the highest-ranked Asian university and the first from Asia to be placed in the ranking's top 10, which is dominated by universities from the United States and Britain.

"In the coming years, we look forward to drawing upon the wisdom, experience and support of our new chancellor as we rethink education and take the NUS journey forward as a leading global university, shaping the future," said Prof Tan.

During the event on Jan 4, the Elements of the NUS Crest – a memento comprising a lion, a book and three interlocking rings – was presented to Mr Tharman.

anjali@sph.com.sg