

Yale-NUS picks Tan Tai Yong as new president



Professor Tan Tai Yong. Photo: Yale-NUS

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SINGAPORE – After an eight-month global search, Yale-NUS College has looked in-house and picked historian Tan Tai Yong as its new President.

Professor Tan, who was a Nominated Member of Parliament, will take office from July, succeeding the liberal arts college's founding President Pericles Lewis, who will be returning to Yale University to take up a senior administrative post. Since October 2014, Prof Tan is the Executive Vice-President (Academic Affairs) of Yale-NUS. He was formerly the Vice Provost (Student Life) at the National University of Singapore and Dean of its Arts and Social Science faculty, among other appointments.

In a press statement, the college said its governing board on Tuesday (March 14) unanimously elected Prof Tan after the "extensive" worldwide search led by Yale University President Emeritus Richard C Levin and NUS President Tan Chorh Chuan.

Prof Levin said: "The Search Committee cast its net around the world... We considered many outstanding candidates, but in the end, we concluded that the best candidate was right here." Prof Tan Chorh Chuan described the Yale-NUS President-designate as a "highly effective academic leader" who is widely respected for his leadership qualities, strong interpersonal skills, empathy and grace. "He is deeply committed to liberal arts education and is truly passionate about Yale-NUS College in particular," he added.

Yale-NUS had announced in July last year Prof Lewis' impending departure. With a new President coming onboard, the college will have an entirely different senior leadership compared to the team in place when it was launched in 2011.

Prof Lewis said he was "overjoyed" to be handing over to his "friend and colleague". "His wisdom, energy, and calm have improved Yale-NUS immeasurably since he joined the College full-time two and a half years ago," he added.

Prof Tan Tai Yong described his appointment as the "greatest privilege" and said he was looking forward to working with his colleagues to "advance the College in the coming years".