

President's Science & Technology Medal 2016

CITATION

Professor Bertil ANDERSSON
President, Nanyang Technological University

One-line Citation

“For his distinguished contributions to the development of Singapore’s research capabilities and his visionary transformation of NTU into a world-class institution reputed internationally for excellence in research and education”

Full Citation

Professor Bertil Andersson, President of Nanyang Technological University (NTU), has been widely recognised as the key driving force behind the rapid, impressive transformation of NTU into a world-class institution reputed for excellence in research and education.

Beyond his outstanding contributions at NTU, he has played an active role in setting the national direction for research and development (R&D) to support Singapore’s ambitions to be a global R&D hub.

A world-renowned plant biochemist from Sweden and a member of several high-level international learned societies who has been the recipient of numerous honorary doctorates, Professor Andersson is the pioneer of artificial leaf research where sunlight is tapped to produce sustainable energy.

With a longstanding association with the Nobel Foundation, he was also previously the Rector of Linköping University in Sweden, Vice President of the European Commission’s Research Advisory Board and Chief Executive of the European Science Foundation.

With his impressive credentials in research and administration of research, he was invited in 2005 by the National Research Foundation which was chaired by Dr Tony Tan to be a member of its Scientific Advisory Board that advises Singapore on its national science and technology strategies.

Impressed by what he saw in Singapore and at NTU, Professor Andersson later accepted the offer to be NTU’s first Provost in 2006. A firm believer in the Humboldtian concept of a holistic combination of research and education, he championed together with the university management and Board of Trustees many strategic thrusts to redefine education and research at NTU.

In 2011, Professor Andersson was appointed the third President of NTU. Despite NTU being such a young university, he has steered the University to phenomenal success internationally within a short span of time. In 2015 and again in 2016, NTU is ranked within the world’s top 15 and leads the top Asian universities in normalised citation impact in research. NTU has also been ranked the world’s No 1 young university for the last three years.

Under his leadership, NTU has established a track record of winning competitive research grants, partnering with the world’s biggest industry and academic players, and attracting world-acclaimed scientists.

Most significantly, Professor Andersson, a Fellow of Imperial College London, was pivotal in NTU setting up a joint medical school with Imperial in 2013 to train more doctors to alleviate Singapore's shortage of clinicians.

The development of young talents is always close to his heart. To attract the brightest young investigators, he recommended the formation of the NRF Fellowship Programme and set up a similar programme at NTU called the Nanyang Assistant Professorship, modelled after the European Young Investigator Awards.

Professor Andersson's contributions extend far beyond NTU. He has been leading A*STAR's talent search in the last six years to nurture the brightest young minds in the fields of science and technology in Singapore. As an A*STAR Board member, he worked with Nobel Laureate Sydney Brenner in the evaluation of A*STAR's efforts to make Biomedical Sciences one of the key pillars of Singapore's economy.

He was also a Board member of the Building and Construction Authority, Singapore's national body for building standards. And although a non-Singaporean, he has also contributed to the national defence system through his interface with MINDEF and the SAF Academy.

For his distinguished contributions to the development of Singapore's research capabilities and visionary transformation of NTU into a world-class institution reputed internationally for excellence in research and education, Professor Bertil Andersson is awarded the 2016 President's Science and Technology Medal.