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New chief describes NTU as ideal place to research, test and showcase smart tech

NTU aims to be S'pore's largest smart campus

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A Nanyang Technological University (NTU) student may find himself riding a driverless bus, using drones to deliver parcels to friends or relying on robots to return food trays.

That is what the near future may look like at NTU, which is positioning itself to be Singapore's largest "smart campus".

In the nearer future — the next few weeks actually — NTU students will get smart passes that can be used for purposes from cashless payments in the canteen to borrowing books from the library.

As the pass comes with a Flash-Pay function, it can also be used like an ez-link card and as a stored-value card for shopping.

NTU president Subra Suresh, who took up the position at the start of the month, has unfurled plans to transform NTU into a smart campus that harnesses digital technology and tech-enabled solutions for better learning and living.

The US scientist used to be president of Carnegie Mellon University and director of the National Science Foundation, which aims to advance science and engineering research and education in the US.

In a media conference yester-

An NTU student using the smart pass to pay in school. TNP PHOTO: **NG SOR LUAN**

day, Professor Suresh said NTU is an ideal place to research, test and showcase new smart technologies, given its 200ha campus and a student and faculty population of 40,000.

He said the university's strengths include key components driving the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

They include robotics, artificial intelligence, real-time and deep data generation and analytics.

NTU's strengths in these areas have drawn interest from start-ups, global firms, other universities and government agencies to set up partnerships and programmes that foster innovation, he said.

NTU was recently ranked the top university in the world for artificial intelligence (AI) by Japanese news agency Nikkei and Elsevier, a publisher of scientific journals, based on research citations in the field between 2012 and 2016.

Prof Suresh also announced that NTU will prepare all undergraduates for the future with new core modules such as introduction to AI, beginning with the new academic year this August.

It will also offer a new undergraduate degree programme in data science and AI.

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