Emory prof to become SMU provost

By LEE U-WEN

A TOP marketing professor from Emory University in the US will soon join Singapore Management University (SMU) as provost.

Rajendra Srivastava, who is now wrapping up a nine-year stint at Emory’s Goizueta School of Business, takes up his new appointment on July 1.

As provost, the 56-year-old will assume the third most senior post on the SMU management team, after president Howard Hunter and deputy president Tan Chin Tiong.

Besides being provost, Prof Srivastava will also be vice-president for academic affairs. His main job will be to oversee the strengthening of the undergraduate curriculum, graduate and research programmes. The deans of all six SMU schools will report to him.

In an e-mail interview with BT, Prof Srivastava – known as “Raj” in academic circles – said that he plans to create a healthy research environment at SMU in areas such as hedge funds and services and marketing.

On why he decided to join SMU, he said that he was attracted by the university’s willingness to work with other top universities around the world.

“Singapore’s commitment to research, education and knowledge is also noteworthy,” he said. “The opportunity to be part of a forward-looking team and SMU’s aspirations clinched the deal. While SMU is young, it does not come with ‘legacy systems’ that resist change.”

Giving his take on SMU’s newest recruit,

Prof Srivastava: Takes up his new appointment on July 1

Prof Hunter said that the university’s rapid growth over the past eight years made it essential to have another senior academic leader on board to help him and Prof Tan take the institution forward.

“Raj, with his many years of experience in heading academic affairs and executive education at top American universities, and impressive track record in research, will be more than capable of taking charge of SMU’s academic advancement,” he said.

Prof Srivastava is not the first person from Emory to join SMU. Prof Hunter spent 27 years there, holding various posts such as chief academic officer, provost and dean of its law school. His predecessor at SMU, Robert Frank, was also from Emory.

Prof Tan is SMU’s current provost but will relinquish the post he has held for nine years to make way for Prof Srivastava.

“The search for a provost took us one-and-a-half years and is part and parcel of our policy to bring in new people with fresh ideas and perspectives,” said Prof Tan.