

Utah State University Names New Engineering Dean | College of Engineering

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Monday, May. 14, 2018 — Longtime Utah State University professor and administrator Jagath Kaluarachchi has been selected as the new dean of USU's College of Engineering.

Kaluarachchi, who has served as the interim dean in the College of Engineering since July 2016, will officially step into a permanent role on July 1.

"Dr. Kaluarachchi brings decades of valuable experience to the position of dean in the College of Engineering," USU President Noelle Cockett said. "He is well respected as a teacher and researcher in the college, as well as around the world. Jagath has done a tremendous job of overseeing the College of Engineering over the past two years, and am I certain that he will continue to help move it forward in the future, increasing its already strong standing nationally and internationally."



Jagath Kaluarachchi has been selected as the new dean of USU's College of Engineering.

Kaluarachchi emerged as the top candidate following a national search directed by Maura Hagan, the dean of the USU's College of Science.

"It was a privilege to work with the cohort of faculty from the College of Engineering who served on the search committee with me," Hagan noted. "These individuals represented the broad spectrum of expertise and experience in the college. They were thoughtful and deliberative in our process to identify the candidate who was most qualified and the best fit for the position of dean."

"Jagath will build upon his experiences as associate dean and interim dean," Hagan added. "We look forward to his leadership of the College of Engineering at USU."

Kaluarachchi initially joined the engineering faculty at USU in 1991. He served as an associate dean from 2007-12, as senior associate dean from 2012-16 and head of the Biological Engineering Department from 2014-16.

Kaluarachchi moved into the role of interim dean shortly after former dean Christine Hailey announced her resignation in order to take a position as the dean of the College of Science and Engineering at Texas State University in San Marcos.

"One good thing moving forward is that since becoming the interim dean, I never thought of me as a person who was just holding things together," Kaluarachchi noted. "I thought I should do what needed to happen in this college, and I have done it. And because of that, I feel that I have not wasted the opportunity to move the college forward."

"It has also been to my advantage that I've gotten to know the college a lot more in depth."

A native of Sri Lanka, Kaluarachchi received his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka, and later earned a master's in civil engineering with an emphasis in hydrology from the University of Hong Kong. Kaluarachchi completed his doctorate work at Virginia Tech in 1988 in environmental sciences and engineering with an emphasis on subsurface hydrology and contaminant transport.

Kaluarachchi was an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering at USU from 1991-95, an associate professor from 1995-2001 and has served as a professor since 2001. He also spent time as a visiting professor at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden, and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, Switzerland.

A licensed professional engineer in the state of Utah, Kaluarachchi has conducted many international development projects involving water management in arid

regions, including Ethiopia, Ghana, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine and Sri Lanka.

“Dr. Kaluarachchi’s strong commitment to Utah State University and the College of Engineering make him an excellent choice to become the next leader of that college,” USU Interim Provost Larry Smith said. “His knowledge, experience and passion about engineering education and research is impressive, and I am confident he will lead the college to a greater position of strength and success.”

The USU College of Engineering, which boasts more than 3,000 students and 100 faculty members, is comprised of six academic departments: Biological Engineers, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Computer Science, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Engineering Education and Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering.

“We have a great college here because we have outstanding faculty members who are doing really great work in research, academic and outreach activities,” Kaluarachchi said. “And we also have remarkable students who always do really well in regional and national competitions, and a very good supporting staff. But something else we have in addition to tremendous faculty, staff and students are really good facilities. When it comes to teaching and high-end research in engineering, you’ve got to have exceptional facilities, and we have been blessed with that.

“We are very proud our college and the achievements that we accumulated. We are essentially doing tomorrow’s work today,” Kaluarachchi declared. “But having said that, we also have a lot of potential to grow further. We need to use those strengths to move forward and achieve our maximum potential.”

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