UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT  
CENTRAL COMMUNITY SERVICE UNIT

MEMO

From: Director, CCSU

Ref: 021

Date: 20 – 12 – 2022

To: DVC R&amp;D

RE: SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL REPORT FOR CENTRAL COMMUNITY

SERVICE UNIT

In reference to your memo of December 6, 2022 regarding the above subject, I am presenting  
the Annual Report on behalf of the Central Community Service Unit – CCSU.  
Introduction:  
The Nigerian government through the National Universities Commission (NUC) has  
designed the Nigerian university curriculum to accommodate three significant tiers of social  
development: Research, Teaching and Community Service. It is for the reason of initiating  
the third tier that the idea to institutionalize and incorporate the Central Community Service  
Unit in the University of Port Harcourt came into being. This process began in the first  
meeting of the provisional Senate of the University in 1976 in which a committee was  
instituted. The aim of the committee was to mandate and engage staff/students to represent  
the university in rendering community services to the urban and rural host communities. At  
the second meeting of Senate which held on January 5, 1977, it was considered appropriate to  
rebrand the programme from “National Self-reliance” to “Community Service Field  
Courses.” It is stated in the Community Service Brochure that the objectives of the  
community service projects in the University of Port Harcourt is meant to be practically  
carried out through the supervision of appointed staff for the Level 200 students who are  
mandated to address some of the social challenges of the host-communities as well as the  
university community itself.  
Community Service embarked by students of the University of Port Harcourt may appear in  
any form: disposal of waste materials or waste management programmes, sensitization programmes  
on health status, sensitization programmes on climate or environmental matters which include eco-  
friendly methods of waste disposals outside its dumping in rivers, tree planting, evacuation of debris  
from gutters, beautification projects such as painting, weeding grasses, evacuating plastic wastes  
blocking sewages, cleaning of market spaces, and, in some cases, building infrastructural amenities

for the target-community. The programme is expected inculcate and develop a consciousness of  
responsibility in the students involved against the backdrop of their society and the  
gratification of service to others.  
In the University of Port Harcourt, Community Service is a University-wide  
programme, graded as a prerequisite or compulsory One-credit Unit course for all Level 200  
students. The course offers a first-hand opportunity for students to gain adequate experience  
as they participate and volunteer their services in satisfying the university and host-  
community’s need. The aim is to expand a student’s understanding of civic duties and  
citizenship. A student who has dedicatedly embarked on a Community Service will fully  
appreciate the need to give back to society through service rendering. The programmes  
carried out in the CCSU help to increase self-awareness, social participation, and teamwork  
in the students. As one gets to understand one’s role and place in a given society, one begins  
to voluntarily give to the cause of change through service rendering. A student who  
understands the concept of Community Service will become an instrument of change in any  
given society. This is because of the social identity transformation, and upgrade in  
psychological and social wellbeing such service produces in the individual or group.  
During Community Service, there is an enlarged spirit which the entire process offers  
to a student. This is an education that takes place in the life of the student. This manifests as a  
mind shift as the humanity of the one who provides service is expanded based on the new  
experiences gained and the knowledge acquired. It enriches the education process because  
students take the lesson they learn in class out into the community in order to make society a  
better place. Many have assumed that there is no connection between what is taught in the  
university and real society, but Community Service is one of the avenues where this  
assumption is proven wrong.  
Activities:  
Our Community Service programme, as earlier mentioned, involves a variety of  
physical/practical activities. Our students start their Community Service orientations from the  
classroom experience where academic staff from each department (known as Reps), under  
the supervisory role of Faculty Coordinators, educate the students of the meaning,  
importance, aim, objectives, and the modus operandi of the Community Service system in the  
university. On an agreed date, students are moved out to the field in whichever location that  
has been selected for the project. The Reps and Faculty coordinators are actively involved in  
ensuring the success of the project. At the end of the activity, the student’s output is evaluated  
and graded.

Achievements:  
The year 2022 will go down in the history of our university’s academic calendar as one that  
was distorted by the eight months ASUU strike. However, immediately the strike was  
suspended, the new Director engaged the students of the six Faculties that were yet to embark  
on their Community service project, to carry out the project of painting the entire cape stones  
in the Abuja campus. This project was quickly and successfully done in order to project a  
colourful aesthetical outlook of the university especially as the university was preparing for  
its 33 rd convocation programme. Kindly see samples of a very few of painted cape stones in  
the university:

EAST-WEST ENTRANCE, ABUJA CAMPUS

ROUND-ABOUT BY CONOIL PETROL STATION, ABUJA CAMPUS

Within the very short space of time available before the convocation, the Central Community  
Service Unit was also able to fill up some of the potholes around the university which have  
affected the smooth movements of vehicles around the campus. Kindly see very few pictures  
below:

ENTRANCE TO ENGLISH HOUSE / FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION &amp; MEDIA

STUDIES

FRONT PREMISES OF THE SCHOOL OF BASIC STUDIES

Research Publications/Innovations:  
The unit has sent to the University Press an updated Brochure beyond the 2018 print when  
last it was printed. This updated version is expected to be published by January 2023 to kick-  
start with the new session. The new Brochure has been significantly modified so as to  
effectively reflect the pictorial activities of the unit, the changes introduced, and give proper  
orientation-direction regarding the aim and objectives of the unit.  
Challenges:  
The Central Community Service Unit is faced with a number of challenges, some of them as  
old as the directorate itself. The two very prominent ones are:  
1. Lack of vehicles  
2. Lack of office accommodation.  
Vehicles: The nature of the field projects that are constantly carried out requires vehicles to  
safe cost. Each time students and their Departmental Reps and Faculty Coordinators are  
engaged in projects on behalf of their Faculties at specified locations within host  
communities, the CCSU usually embarks on hiring buses and vans which are to carry  
students and working tools/materials (wheelbarrows, shovels, head-pans, buckets, etc.) to the  
sites. The hiring process is quite cost intensive, but would have been significantly mitigated if  
the Unit had its own utility vehicles.  
Accommodation: Lack of a befitting office space for staff of the Community Service has  
also affected the morale of staff. The Directorate only consists of three offices that over ten  
staff utilize as space for their intellectual and manual workforce. About six of its non-  
teaching staff have no offices, while others are crammed into a small room called General  
Office. Moreover, the ceiling in the available office is about to cave in due to termite-eaten  
woods. Virtually every past Director has at one point or the other raised concerns about the  
lack of vehicles and accommodation space for staff. In addition, the CCSU does not have  
rooms where to store its working instruments. The Director has only been able to create a  
makeshift space for this purpose which cannot be considered as an adequate and permanent  
plan.  
Recommendation:  
Two significant challenges stand out, hence the following recommendations:

1. Vehicles are needed at the Central Community Service Unit to facilitate the projects  
proposed for each session.  
2. A new office complex should be recommended for the CCSU to accommodate its  
staff and working tools.  
Conclusion:  
As earlier hinted in the introductory part of this Report, the Community Service programme  
is an integral and important part of the Nigerian university system recognized by the National  
University Commission – NUC. Unique UNIPORT has cut a special niche for itself  
especially under the current administration which is apparently driven by pragmatism and  
standard. In order to comply with global practice regarding community services in tertiary  
institutions beyond the borders of Nigeria, Community Service which is one of the major  
tiers of the Nigerian university system must take its rightful place in the University of Port  
Harcourt. For this to happen, the directorate will require every ounce of support it can get in  
order to measure and meet the required standard. There is strong hope that the current  
administration led by a very highly pragmatic vice chancellor will look into this matter  
favourably.

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Prof Psalms Chinaka  
(Director, CCSU)