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)