

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR, PROFESSOR BENJAMIN CHUKWUMA OZUMBA ON THE OCCASION OF THE SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP FOR BOTH CAMPUSES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA ORGANIZED BY UNN SERVICOM UNIT

Protocol

I am delighted that this University is mounting this SERVICOM Sensitization programme. SERVICOM is a fundamental project in this University and this is why I am the Chairman of the SERVICOM Committee and have personally attended its meetings. Consequently, this sensitization programme is germane to helping the staff get acquainted with the necessities and niceties of service delivery for the good and progress of our University. Equally, it is relevant for driving the positive transformations we envisaged and are implementing to make our University relevant and competitive in the 21st century. Consequently, the processes and procedures of operations in this institution merit needed surgical dissecting to identify maladies, and specialist stitching to enthrone pertinent restructuring paramount for enthroning dynamism and excellence in our institution.

I had earlier unveiled a five-point agenda for the University which would position this institution as an academic giant and a pace-setter among universities in the developing countries. Consequently, this

administration would advance a convincing case for the University of Nigeria in both national and international environment, harness the abundant human resources in the University to achieve a shared vision, and articulate and execute a strategic plan informed by the role and responsibilities of a University system in the 21st century.

In addition, this administration has been identifying with students by encouraging synergic official involvement in students-led activities to ensure tranquility and conducive intellectual environment necessary for attaining worthy breakthroughs in research and knowledge dissemination. Equally, we have been consolidating on the achievements of the University over the years, in order to maximize its contribution to the society as well as attract resources that would enable the institution realize the mission of its founding fathers.

Furthermore, I am confident and convinced that the execution of the plans we have enunciated for our great university would bring to fruition the vision of this administration which is to position the University to become an academic giant, the pace-setter among universities in the Third World, in the quality of its scientific research, the level of its innovative teaching, and the robustness of its community service. Thus, this administration has always endeavoured to uphold positive values, follow due process, ensure absolute discipline and give recognition to

competence, transparency and accountability in the discharge of its duties. For instance, this administration is revisiting for appropriate actions the appraisal exercises of some academic staff who submitted themselves to due appraisal in 2011, and whose cases came before the University Appraisal Committee (UAC) at that time, but who, unfortunately, had some parameters allegedly misapplied to their submissions. Interestingly, this is in line with the SERVICOM Grievance Redress Mechanism aimed at engendering a conducive and convivial working environment for staff and other stakeholders of our University.

I agree with the then President Olusegun Obasanjo when he stated at the Opening of the Special Presidential Retreat on Service Delivery in Abuja from 19th – 21st March 2004 that:

Service is what we offer ourselves for. And service is what the people are entitled to expect from us. In this simple equation, lies our great concern when the people feel shortchanged in their expectations of the standard of service provided by government institutions.

This situation has damaging effects on the amount of trust the people have in our ability In the circumstances, we as responsible and sensitive government are obliged to take steps to thoroughly examine what the real trouble is with service delivery and determine how best we can remedy it.

...., we were, like most Nigerians, well aware of the unpleasant manifestations of the appalling standard of service delivery in the country.

.... Under the popular caption of the 'Nigerian way', many Nigerians have grown accustomed to regarding public service as something you battle for, and you cannot succeed unless you know someone inside the system. Few Nigerians expect to get routine acknowledgment of letters written to public offices, let alone getting attention for telephone enquiries.

Few Nigerians apply for service without budgeting time and money to follow their applications from desk to desk, while bracing themselves for the phenomenon of the 'missing' file that would re-appear after settling someone.

This situation of affairs cannot and must not be allowed to thrive in this University. As a result, the SERVICOM Unit, hosted by the Office of the Vice Chancellor, has been officially established for this University. The Unit's Office is situated at the Ground Floor of the building that also accommodates the Personnel Section of the Registrar's Department.

It is noteworthy that the Federal Executive Council resolved that SERVICOM Units be established in Ministries, Departments or Agencies (MDAs) as well as Extra-Ministerial Departments, the Parastatals and Universities. A directive to that effect was issued by the then Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief Ufot Ekaette on March 10, 2005.

SERVICOM is an acronym for “Service Compact with all Nigerians”. It is mounted on the imperative to change, for the better, the system of service delivery in our institutions; indeed, the country. The core clarion call is: “We dedicate ourselves to providing the basic services to which citizens are entitled, timely, fairly, honestly, effectively and transparently”. This is guided by SERVICOM Principles, namely:

- Affirmation of commitment to the service of the Nigerian nation;
- Conviction that Nigeria can only realise its full potential if citizens receive prompt and efficient services;
- Consideration for the needs and rights of all Nigerians to enjoy social and economic advancement; and
- Dedication to deliver services to which citizens are entitled, timely, fairly, honestly, effectively and transparently.

I enjoin every University staff to be guided always by these principles in the discharge of their duties to move our dear UNN to greater heights.

It is pertinent to state here that I had earlier appointed Professor Chikelue Ofuebe of the Department of Public Administration and Local Government as the pioneer Director of the SERVICOM Unit and SERVICOM Focal Officer of this University. All our staff should give him full support and cooperation in the discharge of the onerous responsibilities of that office. This administration is committed to

employing the SERVICOM platform in making things work in this University so that our numerous stakeholders will always enjoy doing business with us and remaining veritable instruments in the generation of the resources necessary for moving this institution to greater heights.

Thus, the SERVICOM in the University of Nigeria is born out of a commitment to transform the University through a customer-centred service delivery system aimed at satisfying customers' expectations of excellence in academic research, teaching and other related services. In line with the foregoing, the SERVICOM Committee has approved a Service Charter and Complaints Policy for the University. This is being forwarded to the UNN Senate for ratification and subsequent circulation to the wider University Community.

The document is the integrated Service Charter of UNN and describes the services provided by the University and how it can be performed within specified and achievable time frames. Equally, information on how our customers can register their complaints whenever there is service failure in any part of the University is contained in this document.

Let me emphasize that the University of Nigeria is committed, through this Charter, to the following principles of service delivery, which staff are hereby directed to embrace:

- Establish clear, explicit and high standard of service delivery that the stakeholders expect of the University of Nigeria.
- Provide our clients with adequate information about the University of Nigeria's programmes, activities and services in a timely and transparent manner.
- Communicate clearly and effectively.
- Deal with our clients with courtesy, respect, dignity and selflessness.
- Cherish transparency and accountability in the provision and delivery of services.
- Promote meritocracy, fairness and justice at all times.
- Apply prudent use of resources so as to get value for money.
- Encourage the practice of dynamic and innovative approaches so as to realize continuous improvement and to strive to eliminate errors, laxity and deficiency in service delivery.
- Continuously monitor and evaluate provision and delivery of our services.

Furthermore, in the Charter, the University of Nigeria pledges its obligations to address all complaints and suggestions as soon as they are received. However, our clients are encouraged to make genuine complaints and suggestions to the University through the

principal (or designee) by way of address in person, post, telephone or e-mail. In cases where service delivery is unsatisfactory, redress may be sought amicably and with mutual understanding. The University of Nigeria will handle any complaints through:

- The SERVICOM Unit's Help Desk.
- Maintaining a register of all complaints and suggestions.
- Maintaining Suggestion Boxes in strategic locations.
- Guaranteeing confidentiality and privacy in respect of complainants' identity and rights.
- Encouraging complainants to identify themselves in view of practical difficulties that could arise in handling anonymous grievances.
- Acknowledging receipts of complaints within 2 working days; though timeline will depend on channel of complaint communication.
- Endeavouring to handle complaints within one month.
- Maintaining an interactive website for complaints and suggestions.

For clarity and proper appreciation of the trust and confidence this administration has on the SERVICOM Unit, may I use this opportunity to restate that the SERVICOM Committee of which I am the Chairman is to

provide guidelines and make policies to enable the Unit carry out its functions effectively and efficiently. In line with The SERVICOM Book published by the SERVICOM Office, The Presidency, Abuja, the functions of the UNN SERVICOM Unit are:

1. To spearhead the University's Service Delivery Initiative through SERVICOM compliance.
2. To produce, review and monitor performance of the University Charter.
3. To manage the University's Customer Relations Policy including providing opportunities for customer feedback on services.
4. To institute a Complaints Procedure including Grievance Redress Mechanism for the University.
5. To institute appropriate Market Research techniques in identifying Customer needs and expectations.
6. To ensure the promotion of quality assurance and best practices in the University's performance of its functions.
7. To provide a comprehensive and effective training policy for frontline Staff on Customer Relations and related matters.
8. To disseminate best practices and other tips on service delivery improvement.

9. To serve as a link between the University and SERVICOM Office, The Presidency, Abuja.

10. To serve as the Secretariat of the University's Service Delivery Committee.

11. To manage links with strategic partners and other stakeholders on Service Delivery, Market Research, Customer Care/ Relations, etc

12. To facilitate a safe and conducive working environment for staff at levels of service delivery in this University.

Finally, it should be noted by all that SERVICOM in UNN is for the good of all of us, betterment of the system and the upliftment of the society. Staff are encouraged to do their duties with diligence and accountability. Otherwise, the SERVICOM Committee will be compelled to deliver stern penalties for untoward behaviours aimed at undermining the integrity of the University of Nigeria and its motto: **To Restore the Dignity of Man**. In closing, let me once more reiterate that the extant University laws prohibit the following:

- Sexual harrassment.
- Extortion of money before rendering a service.
- Hiding files in order to create the atmosphere for extortion.
- Using one's position for personal aggrandizement or oppression.

- Charging students money for extra lesson, tutorial, or lab work.
- Creating bottlenecks to impede service delivery for personal gain.
- Asking or compelling students to provide money or materials for food or entertainment during Seminars, Thesis Defence or the like.
- Hoodwinking or asking students to defray or pay the remunerations of the External Examiners; sometimes with the trickery that they will be refunded.
- Scheduling external examinations without proper preparation.
- Soliciting for money before rendering service of whatever nature.
- Cloning books and manufacturing journal articles that were never published for appraisal process deception purposes.
- Lobbying of any form or kind to influence the appraisal process.
- Altering/mutilating grades or scores or result sheets for financial gain or any purpose.
- Direct sale of books or handouts to students.
- Levying students for practicals, accreditation, etc without discussion and proper authorization.
- Abdicating one's responsibility or performing same poorly, etc.

You definitely know that this list is not exhaustive. However, the administration will deal firmly with any staff that contravenes these injunctions or any extant University rules and regulations, for that matter.

The Servicom Unit is hereby directed to do its work judiciously and faithfully by helping to fish out all the bad eggs in the system for appropriate sanctions to be imposed.

I thank you for listening. God bless you all and our great University.

Professor Benjamin Chukwuma Ozumba
Vice Chancellor