

LSU Agriculture Faculty Council Meeting Minutes

9:30 AM, Friday, January 16, 2026

Room 212, J. Efferson Hall



Call to Order

AFC Chair called the meeting to order at 9:35 AM

Attendance

In-person

William Afton, Giovanna Aita, Kai Aryana, Eric DeBoer, Carol Friedland, Becky Gautreaux, Chuanlan Liu, Kevin McCarter, Maddox Miller, Tripp Morgan, and Brett Wolfe.

Online

Erika Derma, Jennifer Duhon, Prashant Jha, Greg Lutz, Randall Mallette, Donnie Miller, Vinicius Moreira, Brittney Newsome, Jessica Richard, Jonathan Richards, Richard Vlosky, and Joe Willis.

Excused

Claudia Husseneder

Absent

Michael Burnett

23 members present; quorum was met

A. Remarks and Items from Dr. Matt Lee, Vice President of Agriculture/Dean, College of Agriculture

Dr. Lee welcomed all new and returning council members to the 2026 year.

The National Science Foundation collects data on research expenditures. LSU was ranked 83rd last year and remains ranked 83rd currently. With respect to agriculture science, LSU ranked 16th last year and has moved up to 12th for the current year. Dr. Lee noted that once you get into the top 30, upward mobility is difficult. He appreciates the extraordinary work of faculty who continue to elevate research funding and how they are generating new innovations, making impacts, and publishing in peer-reviewed journals. It only gets harder to move up in rank from here.

Dr. Lee has a 2-hour visit next week with Dr. James Dalton, LSU Executive Vice President and Chancellor. They plan to discuss extension and research at the LSU AgCenter along

with how everything works together so that Dr. Dalton can effectively assist with legislative efforts.

Dr. Lee spoke generally on faculty with multiple appointments. If someone has a 10% appointment in either research, teaching, or extension, does their work product actively reflect the appointment? Nominal appointments seem meaningless in some situations. Costing allocation refers to where the funds come from to pay the employee. Effort allocation refers to the actual job description. This is a broad organizational wide issue and Dr. Lee would like to improve. He has asked for initial input from the AFC.

A council member asked Dr. Lee if the LSU AgCenter will rejoin LSU A&M and become "One LSU."

Dr. Lee responded that the Board of Supervisors oversees the LSU Flagship which includes A&M, both health science centers, Pennington Biomedical, and the LSU AgCenter. The Health Science Centers are eliminating chancellor positions and will be branch campuses of LSU A&M. In discussion with Dr. Dalton, Dr. Lee asked about seeing these mergers with the medical school and LSU A&M. He asked if either the AgCenter be absorbed into LSU A&M or if the AgCenter will stay the same. After conclusion of that discussion Dr. Lee said the AgCenter has a high level of independence. The most change we might see might actually be with LSU A&M. The LSU AgCenter is adding their own people to flagship committees, 27 committees that deal with various aspects of the overall LSU system.

A council member asked Dr. Lee who is the global number 1 ranked research institution.

Dr. Lee responded as best as he could and said universities like John Hopkins and Michigan always rank at the top because of the amount of research being done along with major federal research programs being conducted at those universities. New Orleans and Shreveport Health Science Centers will merge together and will help us in our global ranking status. Dr. Lee also added that looking at total dollars doesn't quite tell the whole story. If you take research expenditures considering the total number of farms in the state, then LSU looks much better. For example, Texas has about 240,000 farms and Louisiana has about 25,000. If you scale the research expenditures relative to the total number of farms being supported, LSU looks very strong.

A council member asked Dr. Lee what Parish Chairs should be aware of as the LSU AgCenter prepares for legislative session.

Dr. Lee responded that Ashely Mullens works with state legislatures. The legislative session starts on March 9, 2026. Messaging is currently being worked on for the new legislative session. We need to come up with things that inspire the legislators rather than filling holes. Dr. Lee will work on this and keep the council updated.

Dr. Lee ended his presentation by telling everyone to stay healthy. Take leave when you need a break and spend time with family.

B. Approval of Minutes – November and December meetings

November 21, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Becky Gautreaux made a motion to accept the November 21, 2025, AFC Meeting Minutes. Kai Aryana seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

December 15, 2025, AFC Meeting Minutes

Becky Gautreaux made a motion to accept the December 15, 2025, AFC Meeting Minutes. Maddox Miller seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Guest Presentations – none

D. Chair’s Report

Carol Friedland provided a chair’s report. She is very happy with how 2025 went for the council. Returning to the committee structure was a slow process but came together well. “Many hands make little work.”

E. Committee Reports and Overview of Committees – each committee will review what their committee has accomplished in the past year and plans for the new year
Past committee leads provided information on some of the activities that each individual committee participated in, how the committee communicated, and how often they met between monthly AFC meetings.

Executive Committee

William Afton told membership that the executive committee tries to meet once a month, two weeks prior to the upcoming AFC monthly meeting on Microsoft Teams. Some of the activities that take place are meeting minutes revisions, creation of the meeting agenda, discussion of topics brought forth by each represented faculty group, and other similar council matters.

Bylaws Committee

Kevin McCarter told the membership that the bylaws committee reviews and suggests bylaw updates. A handful of changes were made last year including the modification of language so that the council is not perceived as a public body and changes in voting procedures. Those changes were finalized and approved at the November 21, 2025, AFC meeting.

Policies Committee

Jonathan Richards told AFC membership that the policies committee meets as needed to review any policies as requested by the council.

Strategic Plan Committee

Donnie Miller told AFC membership that the strategic plan committee met with Dr. Lee last year to discuss how the council can help with the LSU AgCenter's new strategic plan. Since then, Dr. Lee was interim LSU President for a few months and that put everything on hold. The committee's next step is to reengage with Dr. Lee and restart committee discussions.

Work Environment Committee

Brittany Newsome told AFC membership that the work environment committee typically meets monthly via Microsoft teams. They haven't met since before the Louisiana Land Grant Agriculture Summit that was held on December 15-26, 2025. The committee worked to get Dr. Michael Brochu, LSU Ombudsman, included with the extension summit agenda where he provided a session titled *Conflict 101: Embracing & Navigating Conflict*. The overall emphasis of the committee is to provide an avenue for faculty to voice opinions and concerns about the current work environment. A lot of information was collected from represented faculty groups. One of the issues moving forward is to find a way to submit this information and move it forward.

Elections Committee

Carol Friedland told AFC members that the elections committee was created to assist with AFC member elections and the College of Agriculture representative to the LSU Faculty Senate. There are issues with getting an up-to-date list of faculty members who are eligible to run. Having a committee to help with this work is very beneficial because it helps to identify and define who we represent as a council.

Discussion of Committee Reports

Carol Friedland mentioned that committee chairs are not clearly defined in the AFC bylaws. The only defined committee chair is the Bylaws Committee chair because it's stated in the bylaws that the AFC Vice Chair will also be the Bylaw Committee Chair. She suggested that each committee should create operational guidelines to help sustain committee work for future councils.

F. Other Agenda Items

G. Introduction of New Business

a. AFC 2026 Officer Nominations and Elections – See Bylaws Article I.1.

i. Chair

Kevin McCarter nominated Carol Friedland for 2026 AFC Chair. Becky Gautreaux seconded the nomination. Carol accepted the nomination. Council membership voted electronically through Microsoft Forms ballot.

All 18 members in attendance voted in favor and Carol Friedland was elected as 2026 AFC Vice Chair.

ii. Vice Chair

Beck Gautreaux nominated Kevin McCarter for 2026 AFC Vice Chair. Kai Aryana seconded the nomination. Kevin McCarter accepted the nomination. Council membership voted electronically through Microsoft Forms ballot. All 16 members in attendance voted in favor and Kevin McCarter was elected as 2026 AFC Vice Chair.

iii. Recorder

Kevin McCarter nominated William Afton for 2026 AFC Recorder. Becky Gautreaux seconded the nomination. William Afton accepted the nomination. Council membership voted electronically through Microsoft Forms ballot. All 15 members in attendance voted in favor and William Afton was elected 2026 AFC Recorder.

iv. CoFA Representative – see PM-24

<https://www.lsu.edu/administration/policies/pmfiles/pm-24.pdf>

AFC Vice Chair is also the AFC Council of Faculty Advisors (CoFA) Representative. This position is for an alternate AFC CoFA representative to align AFC with all other groups described in PM-24.

Eric DeBoer nominated himself for AFC Alternate CoFA representative. The executive committee will confirm Eric DeBoer as the AFC Alternate CoFA Representative.

b. Committee Selection by Council Members

AFC members signed up for committees during this time.

Executive Committee

William Afton
Kai Aryana
Giovanna Aita
Donnie Miller
Maddox Miller
Carol Friedland
Rich Volsky

Bylaws Committee

Kevin McCarter
Tripp Morgan

Policies Committee

Jonathan Richards
Joe Willis

Strategic Plan Committee

Donnie Miller

Tripp Morgan
Chualan Liu
Prashant Jha

Work Environment Committee

Becky Gautreaux
Kai Aryana
Erika Derma
Brittany Newsome

Elections Committee

Eric DeBoer

- c. Discussion of Feedback for Off-Campus Faculty Evaluation
Carol Friedland made a Word document and added it to the MS Teams folder so that AFC members can add comments and feedback.

The advisory review committee responsibilities are outlined in the onboarding guide.

Kevin made a motion to assign the task of formulating a possible solution to the off-campus faculty evaluation policy issues to the policy committee. Becky Gautreaux seconded the motion. All voted in favor and motion passed unanimously.

- d. F&A Policy Feedback – Assigned to Policy Committee
There are several pages of comments that were added to the Word document file in MS Teams on the new proposed F&A policy. While on the homepage for the general channel click the tab that says “shared” and then open the folder called Policy Committee and find the document titled “AFC feedback on PS-13 Indirect Redistribution” to read the discussion.

Matt Lee says that no other universities offer returns like we currently do.

Other universities provide much better assistance with grant writing and submission.

Some faculty use F&A funds for international travel and association memberships.

Ag equipment needs to be maintained and repaired as needed. Sometimes faculty need to pay \$185k for tractor repair.

Commodity Board funding is a result of impact with the industry.

Members were asked to add their comments and suggestions to the word file located on the AFC MS Teams site.

2026 Meeting Dates - 9:30am-12:00pm/Room 212 Efferson Hall or Teams

January 16
February 20
March 20
April 17
May 22
June 19
July 17
August 21
September 18
October 16
November 20
December TBA

Adjourn

Becky Gautreaux made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kevin McCarter seconded the motion. All voted in favor and motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:19 PM.