

LSU Agriculture Faculty Council Meeting-Minutes
9:30 AM, Friday January 20, 2023
Room 212, J. Efferson Hall



Call to Order

Current LSU Agricultural Faculty Council Chair, Dr. Rich Vlosky called the meeting to order at 9:31 AM

Attendance *proxies are in parenthesis.

In-person

William Afton, Andre Brock, Chris Dunaway, Steve Harrison, Nathan Lord (Rich Vlosky), Maddox Miller, Subramaniam Sathivel, Mark Schafer, Sara Shields, Raj Singh (William Afton), Kristin Stair, Sun Joseph Chang, and Evelyn Watts

Online

Carol Friedland, Bei B. Guo, Kerry Heafner, Michael Mamp, Donnie Miller, Vinicius Moreira, and Cecilia Stevens.

Absent

Bruce Garner, Ken Gravois, and Daniel Swale

Invited Guests

Dr. Matt Lee, Interim Vice President of Agriculture/Dean College of Agriculture

Annual Conference (AC) seems to have been a successful event. Please fill out the evaluation survey sent out by Ms Meggan Franks. In CoA, the semester wrapped up with graduation.

Zero-based budgets from each college are due to LSU Provost today. This type of budget is like a ballpark of total funding requests for the year. The categories within the zero-based budget are very broad. Last year the budget was \$8.4M. This year's request is \$9.1M, an 18.5 % increase. There are to be no new faculty line requests until FY25.

Legislative budget priorities

Dr Lee works with the AgCenter government relations team and the finance team to share budgetary priorities with the state legislature including the Joint Ag Committee. LSU AgCenter has made a broad supplemental request for \$15.7M. LSU AgCenter also has some capital outlay costs. One year funding relative to the legislature is looking good at this

moment. Dr Lee and the AgCenter government relations team will be participating in the Washington DC/Mardi Gras event.

LSU AgCenter is continuing to develop relationships with various industry groups. Dr Lee spoke with the Farm Bureau leadership team, and he anticipates that they will be renewing some of their financial commitments to the LSU AgCenter later in the year. The overall goal of working with industry groups is to diversify funding so that if a cut is received then the organization isn't relying on 1-2 funding sources.

LSU A&M Provost office pays instructional costs for CoA and AgCenter covers research and extension cost and its very similar in how graduate assistantships are paid. Current grad assistantships in CoA are paid in a few different ways including the provost office funding, research grant funds, or directly by the AgCenter. A&M is paying \$23K (9mos) and 30,667 (12mos). With AgCenter being a separate campus, they could choose not to follow this policy. However, to build a research program, AgCenter needs to be competitive. AgCenter will make this a priority with the next budget cycle to get grad students funded on par with provost levels. Dr. Lee wants AgCenter/CoA to eventually set the standard on how graduate students are treated across the board. Dr. Lee suggested that we reach out and invite the current dean of the graduate school and ask him to be an Invited Guest at a future LSU AFC meeting.

Dr. Mike Salassi, Interim Executive Associate VP and Director for the La. Agricultural Experiment Stations

Dr. Matt Lee appointed Dr. Salassi as interim Executive Associate VP and Director for the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station. In the previous administration model as ANR program leader, Dr. Salassi didn't have any budget control. The breakup of the ANR Program Leader model is a good thing.

Dr. Salassi is looking for 2 part-time assistant directors, one to assist departments on campus and one to assist research stations. These two positions will lead to better communication and efficiency in handling the day-to-day problems. Another reason for adding these positions is to increase research funding. Dr. Salassi is going to create a new position with the LAES office to help faculty units by finding funding opportunities, prepare grant paperwork, help with grant reporting, and general assistance to help bring in more money.

Dr. Salassi wants to identify priority areas for the AgCenter to focus on and promote. This list is not set in stone but is a starting point for discussion.

1. Soil health and water management
2. Crop genetics; plant breeding and plant health
3. Livestock and wildlife management
4. Invasive species
5. Precision Ag
6. Nutrition and Food Safety
7. Biofuels and bio products

Half of LSU AgCenter's research budget comes from state or self-generated funds. The state provides around \$23M. Self-generated funds make up \$4.5M, Hatch funds make up \$3M, and Mercantile/Stennis funds make up \$5-600K. The other half comes from quasi-noncompetitive grants (\$5-6M) and competitive grants (\$35-40 M). LSU AgCenter researchers can increase funding from competitive grants by making themselves more attractive via multi-state research projects.

Folks can sign up and join multi-state research projects at www.nimss.org. Once a multi-state research group has been created or joined go to the NIFA reporting site (<http://portal.nifa.usda.gov/>) and edit the project to show that you are in a multi-state project. Being a member of a multi-state project opens access to multi-state funding.

The NIFA Equipment Grant Program to help researchers get funding for special purpose research equipment. Each institution can submit two proposals. Folks should do a search and read the accepted proposals to understand the process. Send Dr. Salassi a summary of what you want and why.

Dr. Fred Piazza, Chief Information Officer, LSU AgCenter

Dr. Piazza was not able to participate in person. He submitted a typed response to AFC questions.

1. CMS Development – We are in the preliminary stages of the planning phase to upgrade our existing CMS to the newest version. We have begun working with SiteCore, our CMS vendor, to get pricing for licensing in a new development environment. This upgrade is not a simple task and will likely take up to a year to complete. Once done, we expect some stability issues to be corrected, as well as an easier user interface for employees to use to post and maintain web content.
2. AgCenter transition to a TEAMS phone system – We are continuing to work with BR Campus to migrate existing telephone lines on campus to Microsoft Teams calling lines. We expect this migration to be completed by late summer. Each unit will be notified in advance of the migration. Training will be offered as needed.

3. Intranet utility for internal customers – A new intranet portal look and feel is on the wish list, but there is no timeline for completion.
4. Security – We are continuing to draft policies and procedures to bring us in compliance with LSU PM-36. In December, AgCenter PS-32 was approved by Dr. Lee and was posted on the AgCenter Policy Statements webpage. A direct link to the policy can be found here: [IT Acquisition and Deployment Review](#)
5. Purchasing – We have developed a list of common IT-related items that are pre-approved for purchase without additional IT approval. This list is currently being transferred to our intranet portal and will be available to AgCenter employees soon.

Organizational Matters

1. AFC website Build-out & Content Update
 - a. Contains archives of
 - i. Meeting agendas
 - ii. Meeting notes
 - iii. Meeting documents
 - b. Rich needs a picture for every AFC council member along with a short 1-2 sentence briefing about what your responsibilities are.
 - c. Let Rich know of any pertinent information that should be displayed on the council website.
2. **Council Members: Duties, Expectations, and Responsibilities.**
 - a. In past years, a considerable amount of membership has not shown up to meetings causing official quorum issues.
 - b. All members represent certain ranks on and off campus. All colleagues within the same rank and designation are your constituents. Talk, gather ideas, bring forth their concerns to AFC meetings.
 - c. Please attend meetings either in-person or online. If you are completely out-of-pocket then have another member be a proxy.

Old Business

Subramaniam Sathivel made a motion to accept the minutes from the December 2022 LSU AFC meeting. Mark Schafer seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Maddox Miller was inadvertently not listed as a new Council member in the December 2022 meeting minutes.

Reports

Council for Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Change Updates (Mark Schafer)

1. The Council has not officially met for 2023.
2. Coming Together for Racial Understanding
3. Diversity and Inclusion Lunch and Learn Allyship Programs (2/7/23, 3/7/23, and 4/11/23). Mike Kaller and Jamila Freightman will lead the discussion on 2/7/23. For more information and instructions on how to register for these free programs contact Dr. Monica Guient at agdiversity@lsu.edu.

Discussion Items

1. Unit Head Performance Survey (UHPS)
 - a. Dr. Lee understands the UHPS as an AFC initiative to send out a survey instrument on unit heads. The information is given to administration for use in evaluation procedures.
 - b. Issue with the release of survey results to all faculty because AFC is not the official supervisor of unit heads. Presents an HR issue.
 - c. Issue with faculty even responding and participating to UHPS because of past experiences with administration.
 - d. A normal evaluation program would start with a survey sent out to faculty to provide anonymous feedback on the dept head. Dean then meets with the dept head and uses the survey results to conduct evaluations.
 - e. Dr. Lee is not in a position to give AFC permission to conduct a unit head evaluation on dept heads. AFC can conduct a survey and share results with administrative direct reports.

New Business

Meeting dates for LSU AFC Meetings in 2023

February 17, March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, September 15, October 20, November 17, December 15

Adjourn

Subramaniam Sathivel made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:06 PM. Sara Shields seconded the motion. All voted in favor.