

LSU Agriculture Faculty Council: Meeting Minutes
9:30 AM, Friday November 17, 2023
Room 214, J. Efferson Hall



Call to Order

Rich Vlosky, LSU Ag Faculty Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:33 AM.

Attendance

In-person

William Afton, Andre Brock, Chris Dunaway, Carol Friedland, Bruce Garner (Donnie Miller), Ken Gravois, Steve Harrison (Donnie Miller), Caludia Husseneder, Donnie Miller, Maddox Miller, Sathivel Subramaniam, Raj Singh (William Afton), Kristin Stair, Cecilia Stevens (Donnie Miller), Rich Vlosky, and Evelyn Watts

Online

Joe Chang, Bei B Guo, Kerry Heafner, Vinicius Moreira, Sara Shields,

Absent

Nathan Lord, Michael Mamp, Mark Schafer

Invited Guests

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

Dr. Lee arrived to the November AFC meeting at 10:45 AM after participating in an earlier meeting. Meeting agenda was interrupted so that Dr. Lee could provide his update.

1. Administrative Update.
Everything is going very well at LSU AgCenter and LSU CoA. Grant monies were up 50% in the first quarter this year, which is 13% higher than the first quarter of the prior year. Dr. Tara Smith has been doing an excellent job in her current role as she travels around the state. Dr. Kathryn Fontenot has been selected to be the Southwest Region Director and will excel in that role starting in January.
2. Legislative Update. The new Governor Elect, Jeff Landry, is positive toward agriculture. There are 30 new legislators for the upcoming term and the AgCenter will start working with each as they get started. LSU AgCenter would like to educate them on ag related issues before they go into session.
3. Unit Head Performance Review Update-Results.

Unit Head Review Update. Annual review has been completed. The overall number of responses was low and that needs to improve. There were some hiccups during the roll out that may have influenced the participation rate. The unit leaders are genuinely doing well.

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

1. Planned campus utility outage.
 - As campus departments are aware, Facility Services is planning a 36-hour campus wide power outage on Dec. 26-27 as part of the campus utility system upgrade.
 - Please work with your building coordinators and Facility Services to make sure freezers and other equipment that needs backup are identified.
2. LSU AgCenter Grant Writing Academy with Hanover
 - This is a program where the AgCenter pays for up to 12 faculty members to receive advanced training in grant proposal development, proposal review and other services.
 - On Nov. 6, an email was sent out to faculty on the sponsored programs RFP list requesting applications for participation in the second cohort beginning in January 2024. Application deadline is Nov. 30, 2023.

Dr. Tara Smith, Executive Associate VP and Director for the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service

LCES Updates November 2023

Positions –

- Dr. Melissa Cater has been named Associate Director of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. This is a part time appointment, and with this appointment, she will remain as Regional Director in the NE Region. She will primarily assist with parish and regional level administrative matters related to local support initiatives and MOU's with local governing bodies as well as professional development for extension faculty.
- Interviews and selection process for Assistant Director of Urban Extension Programming are nearing completion and will be announced early December.
- ANR Coordinators have been named for each region. They are as follows: Vince Deshotel-Central, Carol Pinnell-Alison – Northeast, Lee Faulk – Northwest, Renee Naquin – Southeast and Jeremy Hebert – Southwest.
- The Poultry Extension Position will be re-advertised. It will be based at the Hill Farm in the NW Region.
- The Soils Specialist Position focusing on specialty crops is presently being re-advertised.
- As most of you are aware, our extension administrative team has spent a great deal of time refining agent core competencies and expectations and reconstituting the ALC process at the parish level. The Extension Administrative Team recently completed travel to each of the five regions, where we discussed the core competencies and the ALC Process with all agents.
- Preparations for the annual conference are in full swing. Please register and plan to participate.

- The LSU AgCenter will be partnering with the Extension Foundation to pilot the use of artificial intelligence (AI) via the Extension Foundation Chatbot initiative. The purpose of ExtensionBot is to provide answers from Cooperative Extension resources in an easy-to-use conversational format, much like ChatGPT. While tools like ChatGPT have a broad set of knowledge across the entire internet, ExtensionBot will be trained on Extension-only resources. To begin exploring this opportunity, AgCenter Information Technology will be working with the technical experts from the Extension Foundation to pilot the chatbot for use internally by AgCenter employees. Initially we hope that this process can become a resource to help faculty answer questions from their clientele. To try out a public version of ExtensionBot, you can visit the [demo at Oregon State](#). **There will be a session at Annual Conference focusing on this topic. We are continuing to realize success and impacts across all programming areas.**
- Louisiana 4-H ended the 2022-2023 4-H year on July 31st with 91,127 youth engaged in Extension youth delivered opportunities. More than 10,520 volunteers assisted in the delivery of programs to the youth.
- Louisiana 4-H Program received a \$750,000 USDA/NIFA grant for a new Agricultural Career Exploration with Drones program which engages 4-H youth in learning about drones and the opportunity to receive their FAA Drone License as well as certifications in agriculture land plotting, spraying, or field diagnosis (insects and diseases). Additionally, the grant will fund a precision agriculture hands-on experience with drones at each of the five AgMagic Ag Awareness events held throughout the state.
- Louisiana 4-H Program received a \$640,000 USDA/NIFA CYFAR grant to enhance youth development programming in the urban parishes of Jefferson and Orleans (greater New Orleans). Grant will focus on underserved, at-risk youth through the engagement of leadership, citizenship, and technology.
- The state 4-H program had a successful camping this season at Camp Grant Walker with over 3,300 youth participating in 10 weeks of camp offerings.
 - We had a meeting with the St. Tammany Parish School Board about piloting the LYFE (Living Your Financial Experience) curriculum, and the school board agreed to launch a LYFE pilot at Covington High School this spring.
- This fall Louisiana 4-H and FFA have partnered with Sunshine Quality Solutions (John Deere Dealership located in south Louisiana) to offer the Sunshine Quality Solutions 4-H and FFA Leadership and Career Academy. This new career focused program will place a youth at each of the 17 dealerships as sophomores or juniors. Over the next two to three years, the youth will have internships and learn areas of mechanics, sales, finance, precision agriculture, or customer service. At the end of their high school career the hope would be that the young person would go directly to work for Sunshine, go to University of Arkansas – Bebe for a John Deere Mechanic Certificate, or to a four-year university for sales, marketing, and finance.

- Over the past two years, the LSU AgCenter Healthy Communities program has guided small towns through the application process while working with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development to make funding projects possible. As a result, 11 communities with populations under 5,000 received over \$13 million for pedestrian improvements thanks to changes in the state's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

Ashley Gautreaux, Assistant Vice President; Department, Human Resource Management

1. Updates on the revision to PS-42
See a-b responses in #4
2. The creation of “parental leave”
January 1, 2024 240 hours of “parental leave” will be available for those with a recent birth, adoption of a child, or similar circumstance. The employee requirement to receive parental leave time is at least 1 year of work history with the organization. Parental leave runs concurrently with FMLA leave. It can be used once every 12 months for up to three instances. HR will update PM 20 to reflect these changes.
3. AGxCEL, the new employee onboarding program for 2024.
AGxCEL is a set of tools for managers that will support the onboarding experience for new employees. There will be monthly “Manager Briefing” meetings on MS Teams. Anyone can attend but these meetings, but the target audience is hiring managers and new hire supervisors. There will be an on-demand program that new hires can access through AgEd where they can complete modules to learn of LSU AgCenter Procedures and Policies. An in-person “orientation” is still a part of the onboarding process. The 1st Tuesday of even numbered months will be reserved for this event where new employees can hear from leaders and administrators. See supplemental materials.

Questions/Issues From the Ag Faculty Council via Promotion & Tenure Committee

- a. There is no clarity in PS-42 regarding the reference letter requirements for 100% Research Non-Tenure Track faculty members. From whom? How many?

Language needs to be added to the document to further clarify who is eligible to write reference letters for a potential candidate.

- b. Communications should not be evaluated by the P&T Committee. It should go up the administrative line similar to other service units.

HR understands this issue and is working to resolve it.

- c. Need to modify official faculty appointment on record to match actual effort. It's impossible to evaluate a dossier if this information is incorrect. An egregious example is the AgCenter P&T Committee reviewed a faculty member dossier with an officially listed appointment including a 35% Research appointment when in reality it was a 35% Administrative appointment. As responsibilities change across Research, Extension, Teaching, and Administration, the official split on record needs to reflect these changes.

- d. Regarding recommendation letters that accompany dossiers: How many years can a candidate use the same letters if they fail to achieve their P&T goal? Even if it is one year, much can (and should change) in the candidates dossier. The reviewer does not receive the dossier for re-review. This practice should be abolished (my recommendation to Matt Lee at our meeting last week).

This is an Academia Affairs issue. If the LSU AgCenter doesn't have a stated policy then they will generally be following LSU A&M. Language needs to be added to allow previous letters but the candidate needs to have permission from the original authors for permission to reuse.

Dr. Fred Piazza, Chief Information Officer, LSU AgCenter (Update In Addendum Document)

Here is the progress that has been made on the following issues identified by the cross-campus IT issues working group:

Issue 1 | LSU Broadcast Emails:

- LSU Broadcast emails (from offices such as the President, Provost, etc.) are not automatically sent to all joint employees, so these messages are not always received by the intended recipient.
- Actions:
 - o AgCenter Administration held meetings with several LSU A&M offices including Strategic Communications, Academic Affairs, and Information Technology Services to discuss ways to improve the process of delivering broadcast emails sent by their units.
 - o Many of these emails are now flowing to employees in the AgCenter and College of Agriculture when appropriate.
 - o Hampton Grunewald is coordinating these efforts, please keep him informed if issues still arise.

Issue 2 | Multiple IDs & Passwords:

- Having multiple IDs and passwords (one for each campus) causes confusion and additional burdens.
- Actions:
 - o An LSU System-wide initiative is currently underway that would enable each campus to use their IDs and passwords to access services at other campuses thus potentially eliminating the need for multiple user IDs and passwords. This is a multi-year initiative and significant progress has already been made to several core systems that will pave the way for future enhancements.

Issue 3 | IT Support Routing:

- IT-related problems and/or support tickets are not seamlessly routed to the correct IT shop and/or individuals (LSU ITS vs AgCenter IT) resulting in confusion and inefficiencies.
- Actions:
 - o AgCenter IT and LSU ITS are in the process of investigating ways to seamlessly pass IT support issues between campuses to reduce confusion and hassle.

- AgCenter IT is in the process of enhancing its Service Desk tracking system that should provide a more seamless approach to transferring issues between campuses.

Issue 4 | Access to LSU IT Resources:

- Faculty and staff who serve functions for LSU A&M do not have the full set of LSU IT resources available by default (Box, Zoom, etc.)
- Actions:
 - LSU ITS is reassessing the process for determining access to these resources.
 - Meetings have been scheduled in early December to discuss their findings and determine next steps.

Issue 5 | Inconsistent Policies between Campuses:

- Policies and procedures vary between the campuses causing confusion.
- Actions:
 - All campuses of the LSU System are rewriting campus-level security policies to comply with LSU PM-36. There is hope that these policies will be similar at each campus.
 - The following LSU AgCenter IT policies have been put into place that closely resemble those on LSU A&M:
 - IT related acquisitions
 - Appropriate/acceptable use of information technology resources
 - Future LSU AgCenter IT policies will be drafted to address the following:
 - IT Asset Management
 - Data Governance
 - IT Operations

In addition to what is listed above, AgCenter IT is also preparing to present the following during the professional development sessions of Annual Conference:

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI): Available tools for faculty and future AgCenter AI initiatives
2. IT Lightning Round topics will include:
 - AgTelecom (Teams Phone)
 - Adobe Creative Cloud and MS Office 365 tools
 - Power BI and Data Tools
 - Ask the IT Experts (Q&A)

Organizational Matters

1. New Member Election Results

Arayna, Kayanush (Kai)	Full Professor	Research	On-Campus	Nutrition & Food Science
Gautreaux, Becky	Agent	Extension	Off-campus	Parish Chair, Lafourche Parish

Husseneder, Claudia	Full Professor	Research	On-Campus	Entomology
McCarter, Kevin	Associate Professor	Research	On-Campus	Experimental Statistics
Newsome, Brittney	Agent	Extension	Off-campus	Richard Parish
Roberts, Richie	Associate Professor	Extension	On-Campus	Ag & Extension, Education, and Evaluation

2. Need to hold election for Nathan Lord position-Assistant Professor-On Campus-No Specific Discipline (All College). He left LSU mid-election.

Old Business

1. Motion to accept the minutes from the September 15, 2023 LSU AFC meeting. Sathival Subramaniam made a motion to accept the September meeting minutes. Claudia Husseneder seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Reports

New Business

1. Membership discussed an issue within PS 42 pertaining to faculty members making the decision to go up for promotion early. The employee (faculty member) can make a request for promotion, but at the end of the day, the faculty's department would be making the call on whether that person would continue and go through the promotion process.
Ken Gravois made a motion for LSU AgCenter to adopt the language used in LSU A&M PS 36T to clarify the process on requesting P&T. Claudia Husseneder seconded the motion. All voted in favor, motion passed unanimously.
2. Considerations and Thoughts for the Ag Faculty Council Moving Forward
 - a. I have been told numerous times by previous council presidents that the AgCenter council is intended to focus not just on AgCenter but the College of Agriculture, however I almost never see issues related to the College discussed, or updates from others in the College of that than from Matt Lee.
Allen Rutherford, Executive Associate Dean of the LSU College of Agriculture (CoA), will be asked to provide updates from CoA side if things.
 - b. The Ag Policy Council was created a few years ago to help address the need for more CoA issues to be addressed. It was disbanded as the result of an administrative directive. Overall, the suggestion is for the Ag Faculty Council to intentionally incorporate more college discussions as part of what we address.
3. We also have now been spending so much time on updates that the council isn't really getting to any new business or creating any policy. – *(See Bylaws....is this our mission?)*

My suggestion would be that at each meeting, have Lee present and then alternate with others who come in. Perhaps:

Month 1: Lee and Geautreaux

Month 2: Lee and Salassi and Smith

Month 3: Lee and CoA staff (likely Rutherford and Sparks)

Month 4: Lee and AgCenter IT or other service unit heads

- Updates could be sent in by those groups who aren't presenting that month as announcements if they have anything essential that they want the council to know, and then follow-up can happen when they come in on their assigned month.
- That would give the first hour or so for updates and then the next hour or two for business, discussion, policy design, etc. This would also incorporate the college more directly with updates.

Remaining 2023 Meeting Dates

January 20
February 17
March 17
~~April 21~~ (Cancelled)
May 26
June 16

July 14
August 18
September 15
~~October 20~~ (Cancelled)
November 17

December 13 **8:00 a.m.-
10:00 a.m. (Current and
New Members)**

Adjourn

Andre Brock made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sathival Subramaniam seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 11:58 AM.