

LSU Agriculture Faculty Council Meeting-Minutes
9:30 AM, Friday, June 14, 2024
Room 212, J. Efferson Hall



Call to Order 9:35am by Rich Vlosky, Chair

Attendance

In-person Richard Vlosky, Carol Friedland, Heather Kirk-Ballard, Becky Gautreaux, Evelyn Watts, Kevin McCarter, Richie Roberts, Stephen Harrison, Kenneth Gravois, Kayanush (Kai) Arayna, Maddox Miller, Raj Singh

Online Bruce Garner, Vinicius Moreira, Claudia Husseneder, Kerry Heafner, Brittney Newsome, Sara Rogers Shields, Cecilia Stevens, Sun Jo Chang, Chris Dunaway

Absent Dennis Burns, Michael Mamp, Mark Schafer

Invited Guests

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

1. Legislative Updates: The office did an exceptional job building relationships with senators and representatives. He testified five times or more with other caucuses. The state budget is flat. We did acquire one time funding of \$6 million for equipment upgrades for faculty on campus. \$82 million in capital outlay. Retirement plans are able to be switched from ORP & TRSL. Representative Chris Turner wrote a bill to let higher education bond out \$2 million for deferred maintenance. We are more excited about increased support and relationships of LSU AgCenter and legislators. Actively looking into raises for this year. The plan is to start in July and travel around the state to continue to relationships to gain net new staff. Overworked staff cannot increase production.
2. There are seven new LSU Board of Supervisors members. Dr. Lee has the opportunity to spend the first hour with the Board of Supervisors to educate them on the AgCenter and it is worth.
3. The Baton Rouge Advocate newspaper (June 13, 2024) stated that higher education should prepare for significant cuts for the next year due to a 4.5% temporary sales tax that is scheduled to expire. Dr. Lee is not worried about this since the AgCenter is exempt from typically higher cuts since we do not receive tuition revenue.
4. AgCenter is tracking \$37 million in new grant awards in both research and extension. It is around 15% higher than last year. Carol Friedland asked for the

breakdown. She was asked to email Andrew Schade for this information. *See Addendum I for Andrew's response.

5. Dr. Lee thanked Dr. Harrison for serving on the search committee for multi-hire Precision Agriculture researchers.
6. Dr. Lee urges the faculty and staff to continue pushing out great work and try worrying less over if there will be budget cuts next year.
7. Stakeholder Question: Are there any temporary near or on-campus accommodations for visiting scientists or short-term internship students coming from abroad? Most of them have minimum funding but not enough to afford a hotel stay. Many universities have designated housing accommodations for such situations.

Doctor Lee does not think there is anything set aside. International programs used to have rooms. Burden's "Pink House" is getting renovated, and the plan is to make it available for short-term visiting scholars. Dr. Lee is looking into this.

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

1. Policy updates

- a. P&T annual meeting was held. Meeting was recorded and link was disseminated. Cover pages are due by 7/1/24. Packets are due to HR by 9/13/24. The president's office will send Dr. Lee packet approval notifications on 5/15/25.
- b. If you are in ORP and switch to TRSL, you start TRSL like a new employee. TRSL has information on the website for better clarification. As of now, you cannot buy years into TRSL. This might be something that changes in the next legislative session. Current ORP (more than 5 years) employees have until 12/31/24 to switch to TRSL, if desired.
- c. July 1st budgeting for proposal two-year post-doc fringe rate. It was 53%. Now it is only 14% for 2 years. The position is terminated at the 2-year deadline and no longer because the employee is not benefits eligible.
- d. Fair Labor Standards Act has a June 29th effective date. Approval of time is mandatory.

Dr. Mike Salassi, Exec. Assoc. Vice President & Director LAES Administration

1. Faculty Positions:

- Precision ag candidates – 3 position offers being drafted, 1 additional candidate interviewing
- Sugarcane Quantitative Geneticist – Sugar Research Station – position offer being drafted

2. FY24 Community Project Funding – Ag Conservation through Precision and Digital Ag Technologies
 - a. \$5 million request for precision ag research/extension (\$3.8 mil in equipment)
 - b. Selected for funding at \$1 million – working to develop proposal through NRCS
 - c. Working with precision ag faculty to develop project(s)

3. President Tate has acquired the services of Huron Consulting Services to review the research program of LSU over the next several months. Campuses participating include LSU A&M, LSU AgCenter, Pennington, and Health Sciences Centers in New Orleans and Shreveport. Large volume of preliminary data requests is currently being assembled by LAES staff.

4. LSU AgCenter Field Days Held/Forthcoming:
 - a. Climate Smart Rice Field Day – Tues., June 11, Kaplan, LA
 - b. Rice Station South Farm Field Day – Wed., June 12, Crowley, LA
 - c. Rice Station Field Day – Tues, June 25, Crowley, LA
 - d. Sugarcane Field Day – Wed., July 17, St. Gabriel, LA
 - e. Soil Fertility Field Day – Thurs., July 25, Winnsboro, LA
 - f. Sweet Potato Field Day – Thurs., August 29, Chase, LA

Dr. Tara Smith, Exec. Assoc. Vice President & Director LCES

LCES Updates

1. Associate Director of Youth Development is advertised and closes July 15th.
2. FFA Executive Director is advertised and closes July 15th.
3. Ms. Olivia Phelps begins work June 15th as a Program Development and Evaluation Specialist.
4. Soils Specialist Position - offer in hand with top candidate. Start date 9/15. 100% extension position; based on campus
5. Vegetable Specialist position will be readvertised.

4-H Youth Development and FFA

1. 4-H University is scheduled for next week with more than 1,300 4-H members and adults attending. Thanks to all the departments and faculty for their assistance in making it a great opportunity both in experience and recruitment for LSU.
2. 4-H Camp is underway at Camp Grant Walker and so far it has been a great summer for the kids and camp. We are in the process of going through our accreditation process this summer with the American Camping Association (ACA) which are standards focused on health, safety, and risk management, and are used as benchmarks by government entities. ACA accreditation provides public evidence of a camp's commitment to the well-being of campers and staff.
3. National 4-H Shooting Sport team is preparing to defend their national championship in Nebraska at the end of the month, so we wish them luck to bring home another national championship.

4. FFA Convention wrapped up last week with over 1,300 participants. FFA members will be attending National FFA conference and several camps throughout the summer.

ANR

1. Mr. Bryan Gueltig is coordinating with specialists and other faculty to develop recordings / modules that can be used to study for the pesticide safety commercial applicator exams. These recordings will be available later this summer. Anyone applying or handling pesticides as a requirement of their work with the AgCenter needs to be certified or trained depending on the level of involvement etc. It is expected that all ANR agents will become commercially certified due to the nature of work we do.
2. The Specialist and Researcher contact list has been updated and was sent to the field. I am currently working on edits and will send it out again once updated.
3. The ANR onboarding guide has been updated and is with Communications for formatting.

AWARDS

1. Dr. Trey Price is the recipient of the LCAAA and NACAA Distinguished Service Award
2. Dr. Ashley Edwards is the recipient of the LCAAA and NACAA Achievement Award
3. Drs. James Villegas and Dr. Raj Singh submitted a USDA-NIFA proposal entitled, IPM extension implementation for Louisiana, to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) Fiscal Year 2024 CPPM Extension Implementation Program (EIP). The proposal was recommended for funding at the \$281,116 level.

Dr. Fred Piazza, Chief Information Officer

Assistant Director for IT Support:

Due to the retirement of Davis Dautreuil, AgCenter IT is in the process of seeking a new Assistant Director for IT Support. This position will lead the on-campus help desk staff as well as the efforts of our field service technicians. Members of the Faculty Council are invited to attend presentations given by the top two candidates. The presentations for each candidate will take place on Thursday, June 20, 2024, and will last for approximately 60 minutes each. Full information on times and location for each of the presentations can be found here: [Assistant Director for Information Technology Support Presentations](#)

PC Refresh:

AgCenter IT is in the process of distributing a new round of PC replacements for faculty and staff who have aging primary use computers with standard computing needs. Distribution of these new computers is expected to be completed by mid-Fall.

The council questioned who is receiving the computers and who is paying for them.

AgTelecom (Teams phone services) for Campus:

The Teams phone migration for campus-based employees is nearing completion. There are only two campus departments remaining: Plant Pathology and SPESS. All other units

on campus have been completed. Plant Pathology migration is nearing completion, and SPESS will be focused on in late June.

Old Business

1. Heather Kirk-Ballard motion to accept the minutes from the May 10, 2024 LSU AFC meeting. Evelyn Watts seconded the motion.
2. Reminder: Service unit faculty satisfaction survey will be part of overall employee satisfaction survey. Survey will be conducted in Fall 2024.
3. LSU Faculty Senate Election-College of Agriculture. Correction: TWO open positions to be filled:

Lisa Fultz	School of Plant, Environmental, and Soil Sciences	Agriculture	2024
Kevin Ringleman	School of Renewable Natural Resources	Agriculture	2024

Rich Vlosky (LSU AFC Chair) and Carol Friedland (LSU AFC Vice-Chair) will manage election process June/July 2024.

New Business

One council member suggested having a sub-council to work with Moodle and ITS on campus to relieve issues for faculty and students. Grading aspect of Moodle is slowing all procedures down. Rich Vlosky and faculty council member will discuss more about the ITS and Moodle concerns with Dr. Lee. These are barriers to teaching productivity. They will cc College of Ag Faculty Senators to hear their concerns as well.

2024 Meeting Dates

January 19	June 14	November 15
February 16	July 19	December 13 (Current and New Members)
March 22	August 23	
April 19	September 13	
May 10	October 18	

Adjourn

Kevin McCarter motioned to adjourn the meeting. Richie Roberts seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:36am.

Addendum I

Carol Friedland asked Andrew Schade for an external funding breakdown by extension/research. His response is:

- All the grant and contract funding that comes through OSP gets coded as either LCES (Extension) or LAES (Research). Note that it is tagged at the overall award amount level, not by budget line amount, and as you know, large projects are often a mix of research and extension.
- FY24 (current year) – 70.1% research, 29.9% extension
- FY23 – 81.9% research, 18.1% extension (if you remove the \$10M rice award from the calculation, it is 76.9% research, 23.1% extension)
- FY22 – 76.1% research, 23.9% extension
- If the Ag Faculty Council would like to review data on actual expenditures, the C-2A and C-2B reports on unrestricted and restricted fund expenditures on the LSU website are useful.