

# LSU Agriculture Faculty Council Meeting Agenda

9:30 AM, Friday, September 19, 2025  
Room 212, J. Efferson Hall



## **Call to Order**

Carol called the meeting to order at 9:33 AM

## **Attendance**

### *In-person*

William Afton, Giovanna Aita, Kai Aryana, Chris Dunaway, Carol Friedland, Becky Gautreaux, Kevin McCarter, Donnie Miller, Maddox Miller, Vinicius Moreira, Jha Prashant

### *Online*

Claudia Husseneder, Britney Newsome, Jonathan Richards, Brett Wolfe

### *Absent*

Michael Burnett, Jennifer Duhon, Bruce Garner, Greg Lutz, Michael Mamp, Mark Schafer, Sara Shields, Richard Vlosky

- A. Remarks and Items from Dr. Michael Salassi, Interim Vice President of Agriculture/Dean, College of Agriculture – postponed to 12:30

Dr. Mike Salassi joined the council meeting at 12:30 PM.

LSU AgCenter is working on a rural health grant proposal. These funds are non-recurring.

The LSU Board of Supervisors approved the continuation of a Center for Excellence for Invasive Species at their last meeting. There is \$1M written into the federal budget and the LSU AgCenter is hopeful that it will come to be.

Seven universities (UF, UGA, UNC, USC, UT, TX A&M, and LSU) are putting together a new accreditation model for public higher education institutions, Commission for Public Higher Education, to replace the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). If this moves forward LSU may have to do accreditation for both for a couple of years.

The LSU AgCenter released a new strategic plan earlier this year. There is no change in the way we are doing things. It is more of a restatement of the AgCenter mission.

Internally, we should find one or two of these goals where the work that we do supports it. Externally, we are using the strategic plan to promote research, extension, and teaching. The AgCenter put out a promotional video on the mission. They have also highlighted research teams and the work they are doing with respect to the goals listed in the strategic plan. They are using these media products through multiple avenues. If we are not promoting what we are doing, then it's not happening. We need to continue promoting what we do to improve funding requests.

There was a pause this year in federal funding. USDA released Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) RFP's on August 1. The first deadlines are in early October. There are seven different areas and \$300M worth of funding.

Back when Dr. Tate was LSU President, there was an emphasis on AAU membership, an 8-10-year process, very aspirational. Currently, LSU wants to be a top 50 university which is ranked by research expenditures. The LSU AgCenter brings in \$35-40M in research grants but pays \$100M in research expenditures. Federal grants are important if we want to compete with other universities. Faculty are encouraged to write proposals and obtain federal funding. F&A from federal grants are really the only discretionary funding that the AgCenter has.

Research security and export control are important topics that faculty need to pay attention to. Foreign countries are trying to get research data from U.S. universities. LSU A&M had a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agent show up at a faculty member's office. Predatory Journals will reach out to authors and ask questions about an article of interest. Once that conversation begins, it becomes an illegal research disclosure that violates intellectual property rights. A faculty member traveled to China with an LSU AgCenter laptop with the proper forms filled out. That person installed non-approved encryption software and malware programs were downloaded. The National Institute of Health (NIH) had to be notified that this person potentially violated export control. LSU General Council, FBI, and LSU Police also had to be notified. All computers were confiscated. Let IT know if you are going overseas and they will set you up with an appropriate laptop situation. Export control and research security are very serious matters in this current time. There is now a required training on research security.

The LSU CoA Tailgate event went very well. 700 people registered online. Sponsors covered the cost, making it free to attend. They will continue to host.

In April 2025, LSU A&M made a decision to cut each college's budget by 2%. For CoA it was \$185K. Colleges have an option to submit a proposal to get 0.5% back. CoA submitted a proposal asking for money to fund staff time to look at data for students starting to get into academic trouble. Provost will ultimately make the decision, and we are still waiting.

This is the first semester of a two-tiered tuition model and colleges met with LSU and identified graduate and undergraduate programs. STEM programs would be charged higher tuition, including all programs in LSU CoA. CoA will get \$220K back, which will be a permanent increase in the college's budget. That number will vary from year to year.

These monies will be held in the college for now rather than passing out to all departments. From a budget perspective, limited on FTE's, LSU AgCenter/CoA would need exact funds to change teaching appointments. As of now LSU AgCenter/CoA intent is to strengthen instructional capacity and education quality. Most of the funding in the college budget is to pay FTE's.

B. Approval of Minutes

Kai made a motion to accept the August 15, 2025, LSU Agricultural Faculty Council Meeting Minutes. Donnie Miller seconded the motion. All voted in favor and motion passed unanimously.

C. Guest Presentations

Dr. Glenn Gentry, Interim Director of the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, Southeast Regional Director, was invited but could not make this meeting. He will be rescheduled for the October meeting.

D. Chair's Report

The year's council got off to a slow start. However, the standing committees have been very active and are now producing results. Carol congratulated everyone who helped with providing comments and suggestions on PS 20. Carol and Giovanna met with Dr. Brochu (LSU Office of Ombuds) and discussed several items including whether AFC is an advisory group, unit head evaluations, and how LSU A&M policies and LSU AgCenter policies affect each other.

E. Committee Reports – written report from each committee for inclusion in the minutes, brief summary from each committee

- Executive Committee (William Afton)

The committee met via MS Teams on September 11 at 2:00 PM. Committee members reviewed and edited the first draft of the August 15, 2025, AFC Meeting Minutes, created a draft agenda for the September 19, 2025, AFC Meeting, and planned to invite Ashley Gautreaux and Dr. Glenn Gentry to the September meeting.

- Bylaws Committee (Vinicius Moriera)

The Bylaws Committee met two weeks ago. A bylaw change was suggested that would include a process for AFC to oversee the process of selecting or electing a representative to the LSU Faculty Senate from the LSU CoA. A document with the changes to Article 10 was disseminated to AFC members prior to the September meeting. The committee also discussed removing proxy voters from the bylaws. The bylaw committee still plans to discuss other areas of the Bylaws, and another meeting is planned in three weeks.

- Policies Committee (Jonathon Richards)

The Policies Committee met on September 19 via MS Teams to discuss the tuition waiver policies for both LSU A&M (PM 12) and LSU AgCenter (PS-25). They reached out to AgCenter HR to clarify which policies faculty members with split appointments should follow. HR responded by saying that the faculty member should follow the policy of their majority appointment.

- Strategic Plan Committee (Donnie Miller)

The Strategic Plan Committee met on September 16 to prepare for a meeting with Dr. Salassi on September 18. Dr. Salassi answered most of the questions that the committee presented. All marketing on the strategic plan is more aspirational. From an academic standpoint, there will be no changes in how AgCenter faculty conducts their work programs. Dr. Salassi sees the strategic plan document as a promotional tool. It includes goals for everyone to achieve. He wants everyone to continue what they are doing, but if you can, try to increase program numbers. The strategic plan is a reinforcement of what we are already doing.

Dr. Salassi wants AFC to provide feedback on how it's going. He wants to know what is working and what is not working.

Research expenditures are how the AgCenter is ranked among other universities by the Association of American Universities (AAU). AAU status was a directive pushed by Dr. Tate prior to his exit. Dr. Matt Lee (interim LSU President) is more focused on making LSU a top university and LSU is currently on 179<sup>th</sup> on the top university list. The LSU AgCenter is ranked 16<sup>th</sup> when compared to other universities by research expenditures. Dr. Lee prioritizes being in the top 50 universities because AAU status will eventually follow.

The Huron Consulting Group reviewed the LSU AgCenter and recommended no changes.

The LSU AgCenter incurred a loss of \$1.8M, several positions, with the ending of SNAP education funding.

LSU campuses suffered a 2% budget cut across all campuses at the request of Dr. Tate. This self-imposed budget cut provided funding for salary increases for faculty.

- Work Environment Committee (Giovanna Aita)

The work environment committee reached out to Frankie Gould to learn if Dr. Michael Brochu (LSU Office of Ombuds) would be on the agenda for the Extension Summit (Dec 15-16, 2025). Frankie said that he is on the list and will be confirmed in October. The committee also asked about room sizes to make sure as many faculty as

possible can participate in Dr. Brochu's session. Patrick F. Taylor Hall has various sized rooms, from 30 seat to 130 seats. Now that Carol and Giovanna have met with Dr. Brochu, the Work Environment Committee is planning to meet with Dr. Salassi next. A planning meeting will be set to prepare for that meeting, and all committee members need to be present at the Salassi meeting.

- Elections Committee (Chris Dunaway)

The Elections Committee met on September 18. Dr. Salassi is supposed to announce the election process for LSU Ag Faculty Council by October 15. Within the AFC Bylaws there are representatives from all over the LSU AgCenter and LSU CoA. The committee assigned a number to each AFC position to get a better overall picture of the representation amongst LSU AgCenter and LSU CoA. It becomes confusing when members change ranks during their AFC term and continue. For example, Will Afton joined the current council representing Associate Extension Agents Off Campus. He went through the promotion process and is now a Full Extension Agent. However, he still has two years left in his current term representing Associate Extension Agents Off Campus.

- Discussion of Committee Reports

- Bylaw committee discussion

- The Bylaw Committee should be a standing committee.

There is still discussion on the use of proxies in AFC. A member mentioned that if they weren't physically available to participate in a meeting, whether in-person or online, then they would select someone to represent them at the meeting and help with quorum.

AFC Bylaws Article II section 4 states that if a member fails to attend three consecutive meetings with no communication then that member can be removed from the council.

A member asked the question, what if a current member is on FMLA leave? This could be addressed in the bylaws document.

Louisiana laws on public bodies and open meeting laws state that proxy voting is prohibited. LSU AgCenter General Council doesn't believe AFC is a public body and therefore doesn't need to follow open meeting laws.

Invite Trey Jones, LSU AgCenter General Council to a committee meeting.

- Policy committee discussion

There was discussion on online tuition exemption for LSU AgCenter employees. An LSU-wide email was sent out in July 2024, making faculty aware of Faculty/Staff Tuition and Fee Reduction for LSU Courses. Apparently, LSU A&M faculty can apply for online class fee exemptions but LSU AgCenter faculty can't, making it misleading. Both LSU PM-12: Educational Privileges, Educational Leave, and Sabbatical Leave and AgCenter PS-25 Tuition and Fee Exemptions were linked into the meeting chat.

Now that we know that some policies contradict each other, is there a chance for LSU AgCenter to get better representation? Why do LSU AgCenter faculty have to pay the fees?

A suggestion was made to use the term LSU System Employees as a way to catch all faculty LSU A&M and LSU AgCenter.

Extension employees across the state enjoy the benefit of taking classes and these policies are inconsistent.

The policy committee could use more members. If any AFC member would like to participate, please reach out.

#### Work environment committee discussion

There was discussion on whether the Work Environment Committee should have rotating leads or chairs. Committee members agreed that they were completely fine with the current arrangement.

#### F. Other Agenda Items

##### a. AFC 2026 Elections

AFC member positions will now be numbered so that it's easier to manage vacant positions. See Election Committee report.

##### b. PS-20 discussion and feedback to HR. Discussion with Ashley Gautreaux.

Ashley Gautreaux joined the council meeting after the recess break at 11:45 AM.

Some of the reasons for revising AG CENTER PS-20: Grievance Procedure (last update was 1992) is to make the turnaround times much more practical and to mirror LSU A&M's policy, LSU Policy Statement 80: Grievance Procedures for Unclassified, Classified, and Other Academic Employees. The A&M policy includes a section on which issues are not grievable and presents a conflict between the two documents.

HR will remove the "lay-off" from the list of issues that are grievable, grammatical errors will be corrected, and the protected classes will be updated to reflect classes listed in LSU A&M PS-80.

Conflict should be resolved at the lowest level possible. Concerns should be written and state their issue.

The Grievance Form was not attached to the document because the information didn't change. The only changes that were made were to make the electronic document ADA compliant.

This is one of several mechanisms to file a complaint. Other avenues could be Office of Civil Rights & Title IX or LSU University Ombuds Office.

Civil Service employees have permanent status; there is no impact to civil service employees.

For faculty with split appointments should follow their majority appointment institution. LSU AgCenter majority appointments follow LSU AgCenter PS-20 and LSU A&M majority appointments follow LSU A&M PS-80. When asked if there is a policy statement that outlines this directive, AG responded that is the way it has been done.

c. Bylaws changes discussion

The By-law Committee presented text to update Article X in the AFC bylaws. It provides procedure for AFC to elect an LSU CoA representative to the LSU Faculty Senate. It will be voted on at the October 17, 2025 AFC meeting.

d. Board of Supervisors Meeting report

Kevin McCarter attended the recent BoS meeting and commented that there was a lot of discussion on coach's salaries.

G. Introduction of New Business

Kai Aryana made a motion to recess at 11:27 AM and return at 11:45 AM. Giovanna Aita seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was paused at 11:27 AM and will restart at 11:45 AM.

**Adjourn**

Kai Aryana made a motion to adjourn. Vinicius Moreira seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:53 PM.

**2025 Meeting Dates – 9:30am-12:00pm/Room 212 Efferson Hall or Teams**

Dates-Planned for 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of Each Month. Meeting Invitations Sent  
January 17

February 21  
March 21  
April 25  
May 16  
June 20  
August 15  
September 19  
October 17  
November 21  
December 15 at LaHouse