

LSU Agricultural Faculty Council Meeting Agenda

9:30 AM, Friday, February 20, 2026

Room 212, J. Efferson Hall



Call to Order

Carol Friedland called the meeting to order at 9:35AM

Attendance

In-person

William Afton, Kai Aryana, Eric DeBoer, Carol Friedland, Becky Gautreaux, Prashant Jha, Kevin McCarter, Donnie Miller, Joe Willis, Rich Vlosky

Online

Giovana Aita, Erika Derma, Jennifer Duhon, Claudia Husseneder, Greg Lutz, Maddox Miller, Vinicius Moreira, Brittney Newsome, Jessica Richard, Jonathan Richards,

Excused

Chuanlan Liu, Randall Mallette, and Tripp Morgan

Absent

Michael Burnett and Brett Wolfe

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

Dr. Lee started his presentation by announcing that the AgCenter had just hired a new permanent director for the FOODii program and that person will start on April 1, 2026.

The governor recently signed an executive order on artificial intelligence and the AgCenter had to quickly draft a policy statement (PS-60). This is a time sensitive document and Dr. Lee requests council input.

Administration is getting ready to start the realignment process between the health science centers, Pennington Biomedical, LSU A&M, and the LSU AgCenter. The initial meeting is scheduled for next week. Twenty-seven to thirty flagship committees have been formed and the AgCenter has representation on all. One of the discussion items for the first meeting is whether or not each institution will have separate DUNS numbers. The AgCenter could be a model to learn how other parts of the flagship can function.

The AgCenter will continue to revisit policy statements. Some LSU AgCenter PS documents and LSU A&M PM documents are the same, and sometimes they are different based on our different structure.

Dr. Lee is excited about the possibility of greater collaboration between LSU AgCenter, LSU Health Sciences, and Pennington Biomedical.

The AgCenter will take a hard look at CoA academic staffing with respect to teaching assignments and what faculty are actually teaching. There are a lot of asymmetries across departments. Student enrollment is continuing to grow.

There is a serious problem with graduate education in the U.S., LSU CoA, and LSU A&M. Graduate enrollment for 2026 is down 10%. On a national level the normal rate of growth is 3% and now it's at 1%, which is problematic. Enrollment of international graduate students has slowed significantly. Some national newspapers like NYT and WP are running articles on the potential collapse of agriculture. The current administration is interested in preparing a pipeline of domestic students for graduate studies. We need to be proactive with advertising our graduate programs.

Chancellor Dalton has been invited to the next AFC meeting, March 20, 2026.

Frankie Gould takes information from the field and uses it to tell our story. Faculty and staff can send her newsworthy stories and impacts. Becky Gautreaux will help coordinate with Frankie for AFC.

Dr. Lee and Carol had a conversation prior to the meeting about difficulties that field faculty have with obtaining feedback from their constituents. Dr. Lee committed to providing assistance on this communication.

Claire Bullock is the contact person to set up meetings with Dr. Lee. Strategic Plan and Work Environment committees can reach out to set up meetings.

A council member asked a question regarding the new flagship campus structure and the P&T process. Does Dr. Dalton's position create a new level of approval in the tenure process?

Dr. Lee responded that the current policy states that only the president can give tenure. There is going to be a period of time where policies will need to be revised to catch up with the current reality. Ten years ago, when Mike Martin was chancellor, things went through the chancellor level before going to the president. There will be a lot of procedural issues like this. There is a sub committee within one of the flagship committees that is looking at tenure promotion and faculty ranks. The AgCenter has a more rigorous P&T system in terms of layer of review than A&M.

A council member asked a question about the new leadership's focus on online teaching.

Dr. Lee responded that he hasn't discussed this with Dr. Dalton yet. Research and Extension have dominated their conversations recently. LSU enrolled more than 30K students last year.

A council member asked a question about legislative funding. The last time the revenue estimating committee met there was more money coming in than they thought.

Dr. Lee responded that the expected fiscal reality from the legislature is that there will be significant one-time funds. AgCenter is being told to not request any new recurring funds. This is difficult for the AgCenter because the last two raises have come out of pocket, shifting money from one column to another. We need to pay the people who are putting in the effort and doing a good job. The AgCenter has made great strides in fiscal management, but money is tight. A fiscal request has been submitted through a different process. It was sent to Chancellor Dalton for review and will be discussed later. 20M for research and 4M for Youth Development were included in the request. He is not expecting any recurring funds this time around.

A council member asked a question regarding tenure of extension agents. University of Florida and NC State allow extension agents to achieve tenure status. A full extension agent is essentially equivalent to a full professor in their system.

Dr. Lee responded that those conversations have not come up. The reality at the national level is that public confidence in higher education is low, with lots of antipathy towards higher education and tenure as a model. Public confidence in science is low. The narrative is not strongly in favor of science or extension. Publicly, most of the higher education conversations are about the value of degrees and workforce development.

Overall Dr. Lee is very pleased with our current situation. It's a tough environment but the AgCenter is doing okay. He is hearing positive remarks from stakeholders. The AgCenter moved from #16 to #12 in agricultural research universities. He is meeting with assistant professors later today to go over survey results and learn of ways to help them. One of the points he wants to address with them is that they were hired because the AgCenter believes in them and the AgCenter wants to do every it can to help assistant professors.

B. Approval of Minutes – January meeting

Becky Gautreaux made a motion to accept the January 16 AFC meeting minutes. Kai Aryana seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Guest Presentations – none

Dr. Dalton has been invited to present at the March 20 AFC meeting.

D. Chair's Report

1. We absolutely need to be talking about issues with our constituencies. This should be easy for departmental members. It's a lot more difficult for on-campus at-large members and off-campus members. We have 12 off-campus members segregated only by rank – not program or region. This means that each off-campus member should be sharing the results of our meetings and gathering input. She doesn't see an easy way to do this. Dr. Lee suggested changing election process to stratify by region. Other thoughts are to ensure equal participation across NCH, ANR, and 4-H. Ensuring representation of off-campus professorial ranks also seems important.
 2. We need to ramp up the Policies Committee. Speaking with Dr. Lee prior to this meeting, he wants about a 1-month total turnaround time from asking to our full response.
 3. Carol reviewed the file structure and empowered committees to take ownership of their files and folders. She showed members how to connect the AFC files to their OneDrive on their computers.
 4. We need to start collecting comments for PS-60, IT Policy for AI.
 5. We are being asked to provide feedback on a draft Policy Statement on Research Security for Federally Funded Research (PS-58).
- E. Committee Reports – each committee will provide a brief summary of their meeting and review what their committee has accomplished in the past year and plans for the new year
- Executive Committee
The committee met via MS Teams on February 6, 2026 at 3:00 PM. January meeting minutes and the February 20 meeting agenda were drafted. Issues with bylaws and attendance were discussed and a decision was made to start including “excused absence” on meeting minutes to keep better track of the data. The committee also decided to stop printing previous meeting minutes for meetings because everyone receives an email copy prior to the meeting.
 - Bylaws Committee
The latest version of our bylaws is on the AFC website and all members of the bylaws committee should review to become familiar. The first committee meeting will happen in a couple of weeks.
 - Policies Committee
Committee communicated via email about the documents that Carol sent out earlier.
- Regarding the faculty evaluation document, the committee needed some clarification. Is this a new policy being drafted or is this more of a question that a policy needs to be drafted? There isn't a policy that differentiates campus faculty from off campus faculty in terms of their evaluation or advisory committees. On campus departments, faculty members choose their

mentoring committee that suits their positional background to provide the best feedback for their success. What is the goal of this document?

On the policy committee's role going forward and timeline for getting prompt feedback. Ashley Gautreaux's email request for feedback on PS-58 includes a deadline of March 9, which is before our March AFC meeting. A timeline needs to be established where we can ensure that once we get notified of a new draft that we have time for the committee to collect, review, and compile comments to be discussed at the next meeting. We would need at least one month turnaround for that to happen and the committee can spearhead the distribution of shared documents and lead the discussion at the next AFC meeting.

Carol commented that this suggestion sounds great. Have a discussion at the meeting, finalize an action, and then move forward on it.

The committee would like to discuss PS-58 at the March AFC meeting. The committee would reach out to Ashley Gautreaux to request that we provide council feedback after the next AFC meeting.

Carol suggested that the committee select a chair moving forward.

- Strategic Plan Committee
The Committee met via email exchanges and reaffirmed the plan to engage Matt Lee on Strategic Plan. They previously met with Mike Salassi, but a lot has changed since that meeting. Matt Lee is meeting with the Research Enterprise Leadership Team in a couple of weeks and the committee hopes to meet with Matt Lee when he has availability.

Carol suggested that the committee should reach out to Claire Bullock to schedule a meeting with Matt Lee.

- Work Environment Committee
The committee hasn't scheduled a meeting yet this year. However, all the committee notes from last year were sent out to members. That information will be uploaded to the AFC Teams site. Dr. Lee's committee items are still being discussed. Some of the new committee members have already shared some new topics to discuss.
- Elections Committee
The committee met on February 18. The notes have been uploaded to the elections committee folder on the AFC Teams site. The LSU Faculty Senate

and the LSU AFC are the two elections that AFC conducts every year. The committee discussed putting together AFC election guidelines document. How does representation across geography, rank, AgCenter/A&M affiliation need to be changed in the bylaws to make sure that our election process is fair. The committee also looked at the tools used last year to identify who needs to vote and how to send them a link to vote. Jennie Sparks is the person to contact to get a list of CoA faculty members.

Carol commented that the elections committee is looking into who we represent and who the faculty are because we need to know who can vote and we also need to know who we are constituents are.

Discussion of Committee Reports

F. Other Agenda Items

a. COFA Update – Kevin McCarter, Eric DeBoer

No major CoFA update. There is a Board of Supervisors meeting at 9:00 AM on Friday, February 27 and CoFA will meet before.

b. F&A Policy Feedback – Policy Committee

The Policy Committee reviewed the F&A comments, and they overall agree with them. Dr. Lee already has a version of these comments, but they have been edited for clarity.

Becky Gautreaux made a motion for the chair to draft a memo on AFC F&A policy comments, send to Dr. Lee, and copy Ashley Gautreaux. Kai Aryana seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Off-Campus Faculty Evaluation Feedback – Policy Committee

From the Policy Committee's point of view, there isn't a current policy in place. This needs to be confirmed with Ashley Gautreaux.

What is the motivation for differentiating between off-campus faculty from on-campus faculty with respect to advisory/mentoring committees? Through conversations with off-campus faculty it seems as though they pick their mentoring committees in a similar fashion to those on campus.

Matt Lee introduced this policy request at the December meeting to get AFC involved earlier on in the policy creation/revising process.

d. Nominal Appointment Feedback – assign to Policy Committee

This suggestion was made by Matt Lee at the January meeting. This is something he would like to investigate.

When AFC gets notified of a policy request, immediately include it on the Policy Committee meeting agenda. A shared document would be created and shared on the AFC Teams website for council members to provide real time input. Allow the council 2 weeks for input, let the policy committee meet, discuss, and prepare a report to be discussed at the next meeting.

G. New Business

The next meeting will be March 20, 2026. Dr. James Dalton has been invited to the meeting.

A member asked a question regarding how we send documents to our constituents. Carol responded that Dr. Lee suggested that he would be willing to send something to the regional directors. AFC would draft an email asking for feedback on the policy and Dr. Lee would have the regional directors send out to their regions.

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

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

Adjourn

Kevin McCarter made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Becky Gautreaux seconded the motion All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:21 AM.

