

## LSU Agricultural Faculty Council Meeting Minutes

9:30 AM, Friday, March 20, 2026

Room 212, J. Efferson Hall



### **Call to Order**

Carol Friedland called the meeting to order at 9:37 AM

### **Attendance**

#### *In-person*

William Afton, Kai Aryana, Carol Friedland, Becky Gautreaux, Prashant Jha, Chuanlan Liu, Kevin McCarter, Donnie Miller, Maddox Miller, Tripp Morgan, Rich Vlosky

#### *Online*

Giovanna Aita, Michael Burnett, Eric DeBoer, Erika Derma, Jennifer Duhon, Claudia Husseneder, Greg Lutz, Randall Mallette, Vinicius Moreira, Brittney Newsome, Jessica Richard, and Brett Wolfe

#### *Excused*

Jonathan Richards, Joe Willis

#### *Absent*

None

- A. Remarks and Items from Dr. Matt Lee, Vice President of Agriculture/Dean, College of Agriculture – Dr. Lee is unable to attend

Dr. Mike Salassi filled in for Dr. Matt Lee with an LSU AgCenter Update.

The Legislative session started last week and Dr. Lee along with LSU AgCenter Administration attended. Next week, they will visit the agriculture committees. It is looking like a standstill, but one-time funds may be available. LSU AgCenter is navigating the new leadership's policies. The Governor has stated that the budget won't change.

AgCenter costs increase 1.5-2% every year. This equates to about \$1-1.5M per year. The budget will be tight next year. Last year \$4.5M was secured for lab renovations. Those projects are moving forward with Facility Services on campus. Work should start next month and end in late summer. It does not need to be completed by June 30, so there is no danger of losing funds.

The new Chancellor of LSU has set up transformation committees comprised mainly of administrators and top support officers from different campuses. Initial instructions seemed to imply that policies from each institution should be the same. The intention is to make the research side of the 5 campuses more productive. There is no intention to merge campuses. These committees will continue to work over the next 2 or 3 months.

Bids were put out to lease tractors at Agriculture Experiment Stations. Leasing tractors has been done for the last 7-8 years. 28 tractors are leased per year, with 23 of them being paid by the research station. It averages about \$7k per year to lease a tractor. State regulations state that we can't have a multi-year lease, but we can bid it out and renew it for 2 years. John Deere provided a good deal for the AgCenter last year.

Faculty have been asking questions about Hatch proposals. The NIFA system doesn't require much, but the AgCenter requires more details and a literature review so that AgCenter reviewers can properly review the proposal. Dr. Salassi will meet with Lindsay Reed in a couple of weeks to discuss.

Wendy Simoneaux, VP Office of Budget & Finance & LCES, will be retiring in May. The AgCenter is anticipating making an offer soon so that that person will train with Wendy during the month of April.

The new evaluation system will decouple from the publication system. The idea was to make it easier for faculty to cut and paste from their CV. AgCenter still wants faculty to submit items into the publication system though. LSU BoS requests information about numbers of publications.

A member asked a question about renewing Hatch project. Dr. Salassi stated that faculty can't submit a new project too early. In fact, you can have 2 active projects at one time. There is an issue when you don't have an active hatch project because the AgCenter loses funding for faculty salaries for those without an active Hatch project.

A member asked a question about the possibility of Dr. Dalton coming out to visit any research stations. Dr. Salassi said that he is working to come out and visit some research stations. In a recent meeting with Dr. Dalton, Dr. Lee and Dr. Salassi discussed intellectual property royalties and it appears that the AgCenter has more IP royalties than the other four research campuses combined. One of the issues is that many of the patents at other campuses are vanity patents, meaning there isn't a path to commercialization and not commercialized. One of the differences of the AgCenter is our close relationship with clientele, which helps our research and intellectual property more directly into industry and practice.

A member asked a question about whether faculty at research stations would become part of the AgCenter campus. Dr. Salassi said that Dr. Lee is working on something that would work towards this.

A member asked a question if there was any competitive internal funding available. At this time, the only competitive funding is with the plant biotechnology center. The AgCenter provides seed money every year.

B. Approval of Minutes – February meeting

Kevin McCarter noted that the document title needs to be revised to LSU Agricultural Faculty Council

Becky Gautreaux made a motion to accept the revised February AFC Meeting Minutes. Kai Aryana seconded the motion. All voted in favor and motion passed unanimously.

C. Guest Presentations – none

D. Chair’s Report (Carol provided a typed version)

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. I don’t see an easy way to do this. Dr. Lee suggested changing election process to stratify the 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 Policies Committee. I spoke with Dr. Lee prior to this meeting and he wants about a 1-month total turnaround time from asking to our full response.
3. I will review the file structure and empower committees to take ownership of their files and folders. I 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. Robert’s Rules Briefing – Kevin McCarter

Kevin McCarter provided a presentation on the history, importance, and reasoning for using Robert’s Rules of Order to conduct business meetings. Presentation documents will be made available to council members at a later date. He also recommended three reference books for those looking for a resource on Robert’s Rules.

F. Committee Reports – each committee will provide a brief summary of their meeting and provide a written report for the minutes

- Executive Committee (William Afton)

The committee met virtually via MS Teams on March 12 after having to reschedule due to busy schedules. The first draft of the February meeting notes was revised. The first draft of March’s meeting agenda was created. Will shared some information learned at a regional PC meeting to the group.

Jan Bernath and Wendy Simoneaux will be retiring this year and a new faculty hiring schedule will be in place starting July 1, 2026. Professorial ranks will be hired on January 1 and August 1 every year. Agent ranks will be hired on January 1, May 1, and August 1 every year.

- **Bylaws Committee (Kevin McCarter)**  
The Bylaws Committee hasn't met as a committee. Members have been reviewing current bylaws along with Carol's notes on bylaw suggestions to assess what hasn't been addressed. The committee has identified three major categories of change that need consideration: term limits (not being enforced, or at least not uniformly and should term limits be removed or modified for Associate/Full level?) and replacement procedures. The committee would also like to hear any other suggested categories of changes.
- **Policies Committee**  
Jonathan Richards couldn't attend, so Carol Friedland provided a Policies Committee Update.  
An email was sent out to Matt Lee after the February AFC meeting asking him to have the regional directors send out emails to all faculty in each perspective region with links to provide comments on PS-58 and PS-60. Those emails got sent out after the posted deadline. Carol showed the comments collected so far from both survey links.
- **Strategic Plan Committee (Donnie Miller)**  
A meeting has been scheduled with Matt Lee for Wednesday, March 25.
- **Work Environment Committee (Brittney Newsome)**  
Brittney provided a typed report:  
The Work Environment Committee met via Microsoft Teams on two occasions:
  - March 17, 2026, at 10:30 AM
  - March 18, 2026, at 1:30 PM\*All committee members were present at both meetings.

#### *Updates on Administrative Direction*

Per instructions from Dr. Lee, communication has been initiated with Claire Bullock to determine next steps for addressing identified issues and supporting faculty across the organization. Claire will be scheduling a Teams meeting with herself, Dr. Lee, and committee representatives.

- Committee representatives: Brittney, Becky, and Kai  
Following this meeting, the committee will be able to provide additional details and recommendations to the Council.

*Monthly Committee Discussion Topics*

During our individual committee meeting for the month, the following topics were brought forward for discussion:

- Flex Time Policy – considerations, clarity, and consistency across units
- Work-from-Home Option – potential for a once-a-week remote work allowance
- Employee Resources – including EPA, FMLA, and other support tools
- Communications Department – clarity and updates on AgCenter job postings and general organizational communications
- Employee Retreats – interest in opportunities for staff engagement and professional development
- Turnover and Retention – concerns related to staffing stability and strategies for improvement

*Next Steps*

The committee will attend meeting with Dr. Lee and Claire Bullock when scheduled in April. Individual committee meeting will be held before the next faculty council meeting.

- Elections Committee (Jessica Richard)  
The committee met and worked on election guidelines specifically looking at the list of CoA faculty eligible for nominations. Appropriate titles will be moved off the list if they aren't eligible to nominate a candidate. LSU Faculty Senate elections for the CoA should be held in April.

Discussion of Committee Reports

G. Other Agenda Items

- a. COFA Update – Kevin McCarter, Eric DeBoer

CoFA met before the LSU BoS meeting on Friday 27 at 1:00 PM. Dan Tyrone, LSU Faculty Senate, collects campus reports prior to the meeting. Sometimes quest presentations are provided. Troy Blanchard was scheduled to present this time but Dr. James Dalton was in town and spoke to the group. Anyone can attend a CoFA meeting and Kevin offered assistance to anyone interested.

- b. Policy Committee Business

Donnie Miller moved that the AFC Chair will provide a memo to HR that AFC solicited feedback on PS-58 and the only major suggestion was to better define “Undue Foreign Influence”.

Becky Gautreaux seconded the motion. All voted on favor and motion passed unanimously.

Carol Friedland recommended that the policy committee continue to work on soliciting comments for PS-60. Come up with a new deadline, modify surveys to reflect new dates, and have council send out to their constituents.

H. New Business

No new business

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

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

**Adjourn**

Kevin McCarter made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Donnie Miller seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 AM