

LSU Council of Faculty Advisors Meeting

February 27, 2026
LSU University Administration Building
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808

-DRAFT-

I. Call to order.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:07 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Members present: Daniel Tirone (LSUA&M) - Chair, Suresh Alahari (LSU Health New Orleans), Madeline Barclay (LSU Health Shreveport), Sujoy Ghosh (Pennington), and Kevin McCarter (LSU Ag).

Members absent: Rachelle Brown, (LSUE), Cynthia Thomas (LSUA), and Cassandra Williams (LSUS) - Secretary.

III. There were no public comments.

IV. Approval of Minutes from October 24 and December 11, 2025 meetings

The draft minutes from October 24 and December 11, 2025 were approved without amendment..

V . New Business

The Chair went over the items that will be included in the oral report. The full report items are included in an attachment.

Chancellor Dalton stopped by the meeting to thank members for their service to the committee.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 am following a motion by Ghosh which passed without objection.

Minutes prepared by Daniel C. Tirone, Chair

Attachments:

LSU Council of Faculty Advisors Report February 27, 2026

LSU Council of Faculty Advisors Report

February 27, 2026

Assembled by Daniel C. Tirone, Chair

LSU AgCenter

- **\$1million** in federal funding has been appropriated from congress through USDA/ARS to launch the **Mississippi River Invasive Species Consortium**, coordinated by the LSU AgCenter to lead regional detection and management of invasive species efforts with other Land-grants in the region.
- The **Meryal Newsom Annison Professorship** in Agriculture, established in memory of Meryal Newsom Annison, was awarded to **Dr. Vinicius Moreira**, LSU Department of Animal Sciences. This professorship reflects a commitment to advancing agricultural research and education.
- The **LSU College of Agriculture** has a new record in undergraduate enrollment. The Fall 2025 semester had **1,215 students** admitted and more than **2,800 applications** were received, which is a **26 %** increase from last year.
- Since January 1, 2026, the LSU AgCenter was awarded **\$2.7 million** in grants.
- The **91st LSU AgCenter Livestock Show** concluded with more than **1,200 exhibitors from across Louisiana participating**. Youth from all regions of the state showed livestock throughout the week as part of the annual statewide event.

LSU Alexandria

While continuing to prioritize the needs of the CENLA region, LSUA has recently received state and national recognition for its academic success.

- LSUA has set another all-time enrollment record, welcoming 7,728 students for the Spring 2026 semester, an 11.9% increase over Spring 2025. Online enrollment climbed to 4,801 students, a 20.5% increase in one year. Over the same period, on-campus enrollment grew by 10.4%, underscoring the strength of LSUA's campus experience, expanding facilities, and comprehensive student support services.
- LSUA has been named one of the nation's top institutions for Women in 2026 by *Newsweek* America's Best Colleges, placing #52 nationally out of more than 1,300 colleges and universities evaluated. The ranking positions LSUA in the top 4% nationwide, underscoring the university's strong performance in creating an environment where women are supported as students, scholars, and future professionals. Women make up 71% of LSUA's degree-seeking student population and are highly represented in several high-demand fields, including education (90%), biological sciences (83%), physical sciences (57%), and business (65%). LSUA's first-year retention rate for female students stands at 70%.
- LSUA Ranked #1 Safest College Campus in Louisiana and #7 Safest in America by Niche.com. This ranking, part of Niche's annual Safest Colleges list, evaluated more than 2,000 colleges and universities, places LSUA in the top 1% nationally, demonstrates the university's commitment to student safety and a learning environment where students can focus on academic and personal success.

LSUA is especially proud that Sarita James, PhD, RN, CNE was appointed to the Louisiana State Board of Nursing by Governor Jeff Landry to serve as Nurse Educator for a 4-year term.

LSUA's Dual Enrollment initiative titled Project Catapult: Early Credit, Real Readiness presented at the 2026 Louisiana Board of Regents Meauxmentum Summit in Lafayette, LA won a grant awarded through the Summit Shark Tank competition.

LSUA has been intentional about raising its community and academic profile. As such, faculty has been encouraged to engage in scholarship, earn certifications, and become active with professional societies.

Recent accomplishments from faculty include:

- Craig Roger, Assistant Professor of Business, successfully defended his dissertation and earned his Doctorate in Business Administration with a concentration in Business Analytics.
- Dr. Adena LeJeune was awarded the *LSU Online Embracing Change Award*.
- Lisa Bradford, MSN, RN, CNE obtained her Certified Nurse Educator Credential
- Laurie Pittman, MSN, RN, CNE, CNECI obtained her Certified Nurse Clinical Educator Credential from the LSU Health Center New Orleans Clinical Nurse Educator Academy

- Amie Starks, MSN, RN, CNECI obtained her Certified Nurse Clinical Educator Credential from the LSU Health Center New Orleans Clinical Nurse Educator Academy
- Crystal Smith, MSN, RN became a Certified Facilitator in the BlueEQ™ Leading with Emotional Intelligence at the ITLC Lilly Conference in Traverse City, MI. *Building Communication & Professional Identity Through Active Learning Mock Interviews.*

Recent professional organizational acknowledgements include:

- Melissa C LaBorde, APR, Associate Professor of Communication Studies, has been selected as a judge for the Public Relations Council of Alabama (PRCA) PR Student of the Year Competition. The Michael K. Simmons Student of the Year will be announced at the group's annual conference next month in Mobile. PRCA is part of the Southern Public Relations Federation which includes public relations professionals, educators and students from across the gulf south.
- Andrée Taylor, Instructor of Accounting, is actively serving on three Society of Louisiana CPAs committees:
 - Accounting Education Issues Committee
 - Financial Literacy Committee
 - Career Advisory/Scholarship Committee

Recent presentations include:

- Alice Blackwell, Ph.D.: Presented a paper entitled “And auctors shal I fynden, as I gesse”: Proliferating authorities in the Wife of Bath’s Tale at Southeastern Medieval Association in Cincinnati, November, 2025.
- Holly Wilson: Presented a paper entitled "*Kant on Natural Predispositions in Natural and Human History*" at Three Centuries of Kant: Knowledge, Science, and Values conference in Belgrade, Serbia (by Webex), Dec. 10, 2025.
- Zebulon Bell, Ph.D.: Presented a workshop entitled “Student Attention & Working Memory”. February 2026.

The Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) has been active in supporting the professional development of faculty. Dr. Michael Wiederman & Sarah Sasser hosted a spring workshop entitled “The Work of Teaching Well” that focused on faculty well-being. The CTE also hosted additional workshops designed to provide structured guidance as junior faculty prepare and strengthen their tenure portfolio.

The **Career Champions Institute**, which operates under the CTE umbrella, launched its 2025-2026 Career Champions Institute Cohort of 9 LSUA faculty committed to preparing students for the workforce by embedding career readiness into their teaching. These educators help connect classroom learning with industry and career expectations.

LSU Eunice

Faculty Features

Meauxmentum Summit

Over a dozen Faculty members, plus Student advisors, and Administration participated in the 2026 Meauxmentum Summit to continue working in meeting the overall Board of Regents student engagement and workforce goals.

The **LSUE Meauxmentum Scholars** are leading four faculty professional development groups for around two-dozen faculty focusing on Small Teaching, Gamification, and Transparency in Learning and Teaching.

General Program and Campus Achievements

The momentum continues to build at LSU Eunice where the university has set more enrollment records during the Spring 2026 semester. LSUE is proud to announce that it has a record 3,580 students this spring, taking a record 33,606 scheduled credit hours.

Also, the retention rate for students who stayed at LSUE who were First-time/Full-time students in 2024 was 46.38%; for fall 2025, it was 49.34%.

LSUE is now the hub location for rural broadband in the area. A ribbon cutting celebrated the completion of a data center construction and equipment installation project between LSU-EUNICE and LFT Fiber.

The Men's baseball, Women's softball, and Women's basketball are having strong seasons. The Women's basketball team dominates as they clinched the LCCAC conference. Playoffs begin March 5.

LSU Health New Orleans

School of Allied Health

- Submitted request for school's name change to (School of Health Professions) VCAA, signed by Dr. Guzick, for the board's agenda
- MOU/Articulation agreement (early admission) with A&M for the Respiratory Therapy and Medical Lab Science programs – in progress with General Counsel's review at A&M

School of Nursing

- Construction continues for the nursing school renovations on the LSU A & M campus
- Sending a group of BSN students to National Student Nurses Association (NSNA) conference
- Sending some students to American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) policy summit this spring
- Inaugural white coat ceremony held in BR for Off Campus Instructional Site (OCIS) campus

School of Public Health

- Epidemiology and Population Health Program (EPPH) and Community Health Science and Policy (CHSP) remain the largest feeders for MPH programs, though both saw modest declines in matriculation rates year over year.
- MS and PhD programs in Biostatistics and Data Science (BSDS) continue to draw strong applicant interest, but matriculation rates remain low, indicating competitiveness or funding gaps.
- Joint MD/MPH pathways experienced a decline, particularly compared to last year's unusually high numbers.
- **Council of Education and Public Health (CEPH)** – Site visit Team will be at SoPH from March 4 – 6, 2026

School of Medicine

1. The School of Medicine in New Orleans was re-accredited by the LCME for the maximum term of 8 years. This was based on the self-study submitted to the LCME in July 2025 and the LCME site visit in October 2025. Our next accreditation visit will be in academic year 2033-34,
2. We are on schedule to open the newly renovated research space in the medical education building in April 2026. The 5th floor will open in April with some newly recruited cancer researchers. Construction is completed on floors 6 and 7 and we will begin installing furniture, equipment, internet and AV systems over the next 12 months. The total project will add approximately 190,000 square feet of laboratory space and offices for approximately 100 investigators.

Pennington Biomedical Research Center

- Pennington Biomedical scientist Dr. Candida Rebello recently secured a \$3.7 million, five-year grant from NIH's National Institute on Aging to explore lifestyle-focused care strategies to reduce excess body fat and declining muscle mass in older adults with obesity, also known as sarcopenic obesity. The grant will facilitate the planning and structure of the clinical trial laid out in her project "Lifestyle intervention to improve muscle function in older adults." Older adults with obesity face a combined challenge of excess weight and declining muscle mass and strength. To date, the only interventions known to improve physical performance in older adults with obesity are exercise and calorie restriction, but even with these behavioral adaptations in place, lean mass can account for up to 33% of the weight that is lost. The loss of muscle mass in older adults can increase the risks of falls and loss of independence. Dr. Rebello's research will explore a lifestyle strategy that reduces energy intake without conscious calorie restriction, reduces fat mass and improves muscle function.
- Dr. Catherine Prater, postdoctoral researcher at Pennington Biomedical Research Center, has received a two-year fellowship from the American Heart Association. The fellowship includes a grant of more than \$150,000 that will support research focused on weight gain markers. Her research project, "Examination of Metabolic Characteristics in the Predisposition for Weight Gain," will reexamine existing clinical trial data with the goal of improving prediction models and uncover metabolic markers that explain individual differences in weight gain. Dr. Prater's fellowship will begin in June 2026 and will continue through spring of 2028. The AHA grant funds will be applied to Dr. Prater's salary and project support. She is part of a research team working to develop machine learning models to better predict which patients are more inclined to gain weight, using these insights to influence the development of personalized, metabolism-based weight management strategies.
- For more than a decade, the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension, or DASH, Diet, developed in part by scientists at Pennington Biomedical, has been ranked as one of the top diets ever created. Once again, DASH was recognized in the 2026 *U.S. News & World Report* Best Diets rankings as the best heart-healthy diet and the second-best diet overall. Released annually at the start of the year when many people are launching healthy eating habits and looking for effective nutrition plans, the report's Best Diets rankings examine 38 diets among 21 categories. The DASH Diet received praise for being well-researched and scientifically backed for its health benefits, being nutritionally sound, versatile and largely non-restrictive, as no food groups are off limits. The diet was designed with cardiovascular health in mind and is noted for its fiber recommendations and heart-healthy minerals, such as calcium, potassium and magnesium.
- The Center's Greaux Healthy initiative, an evidence-based prevention and treatment initiative in partnership with the State of Louisiana, completed an outreach tour throughout the Houma-Thibodaux region in January and Lake Charles in February, with stops highlighting the Pennington Generation research study as a recruitment tool for Louisiana families. Since June, Greaux Healthy has held visits in Baton Rouge, Shreveport, Monroe, Alexandria, New Orleans, and the Northshore area – connecting with 304 community and government leaders, healthcare providers, and educators. As childhood obesity rates in Louisiana rank among the highest in the nation, the Greaux Healthy initiative seeks to engage local education, healthcare, business, and government leaders in a collaborative effort to address this pressing health crisis.

- In January, Pennington Biomedical hosted a luncheon to honor 39 employees at the annual service award event. Honorees were presented with certificates recognizing their years of service – ranging from 5 years to 30 years of service – and their names were featured on the electronic billboard at Perkins Road and Kenilworth Parkway. The impact of Pennington Biomedical would not be possible without the dedication and commitment of its employees.

Employees recognized:

- 5 Years: Vance Albaugh, Laura Boyer, Madison Dickey, Mary Halphen, Amy Huffstickler, Maggie Marks, Lauryn Onstead, Mark Pollet, Isabelle Schexnayder, Redin Spann, Tamasha Wiley, Christina Zurbuchen
- 10 Years: Jennifer Bailey, Catherine Carmichael, Ru Gao, Christopher Gelpi, Melanie Peterson, Yaming Shao, Margaret Watson, Edie White
- 15 Years: Richard Carmouche, Blanca Desharnais, Ashley Dupuy, Cynthia Fentress, Andrew Gentile, Chelsea Hendrick, Steven Heymsfield
- 20 Years: Arthur Broussard, Jennifer Levantino, Heidi Millet, Jennifer Parfait, Karen Quebedeaux, Leanne Redman
- 25 Years: Anik Boudreau, Donald Lewis, Nancy Pease, Eric Ravussin
- 30 Years: Frank Greenway, Rachel Romaine

LSU Health Shreveport

- The Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy celebrated the soft launch of its newly renovated Anatomical Sciences Wing, featuring a \$3 million, state-of-the-art facility that represents one of the largest Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality anatomy labs in Louisiana. This new facility, along with a unique 3D scan database of cadaveric dissections, provides an enhanced learning experience for students and trainees.
- Dr. Stanley Hoang, faculty physician in the Department of Neurosurgery, performed the world's first awake dual approach spinal fusion surgery, combining innovative techniques to reduce the procedure time from six hours to three, a major advancement in spinal surgery and patient care.
- The Department of Physical Therapy has received full accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education for the first Doctor of Physical Therapy Hybrid Program in Louisiana. In Summer 2026, LSU Health Shreveport will enroll up to 24 students in the new Lafayette hybrid program to complement the 36 students in the long-standing Shreveport program. A celebration of this innovative educational offering will be held on March 2 in Lafayette.
- The Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine continues to advance regional health knowledge through its multi-year research partnership with Caddo 911 and Shreveport Police through independent analysis of raw 911 calls. The analysis indicated that 75% of calls in Caddo Parish are non-criminal, often related to mental health, and highlights a significant decrease in shots-fired calls. The analysis has also led to the launch of mobile crisis response teams, significantly enhancing mental health support and strengthening public safety across the region.

LSU Shreveport

- LSUS business faculty Dr. Minseong Kim and Dr. Binshan Lin were ranked among the top scholars in their respective fields by ScholarGPS. Lin is currently No. 1 in the world in the lifetime scholarly rankings in industrial management and No. 2 in the data system field. Kim ranks No. 24 in well-being in the past five years and No. 41 in brand loyalty in the lifetime rankings. He's currently ranked in the top 0.05 % among all researchers regardless of field over the past five years.
- Two computer science graduate students, Devesh Sarda and Udaysinh Rathod, participated in the "three-minute thesis" competition at LSU Baton Rouge in early January. Students had just three minutes to explain detailed thesis projects, prioritizing brevity and clarity in their presentations.
- The LSUS Debate team are Louisiana champions as they were top-rated team in the state at the Southern Forensics Championship Tournament. The team championship was highlighted by individual state titles from CJ Longino (professional division) and Josephine Moore (novice division).
- LSUS Pilot Pitch winner Paige Schuldt doubled the size of her business and launched her first Nurture Night event with the cash prize from the student entrepreneurial competition. Schuldt developed The Nurture Nook, a portable pop up that provides breastfeeding mothers a place to nurse at public events like festivals.
- Mass Communication Assistant Professor Dr. Sezgi Basak Kavakli was named a 2026 Faculty Champion by the University of Vermont's Center for Community News. Kavakli institutes community news principles in her classes and re-launched LSUS's student-run news organization The Almagest this past fall.
- Three LSUS computer science students created a prototype designed to reduce anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tears, one of the most devastating sports injuries. The team were finalists in the DevDays HealthTech Challenge at LSU Baton Rouge this past December. Dr. Urska Cvek led the team of Augustine Nwafor, Ricky Wiggins Jr. and Stewart Greathouse.
- LSUS ranked No. 3 among the state's universities in an analysis conducted by Niche.com, an online platform that helps connect prospective college students with schools.

LSU A&M

- LSU's biggest research news so far this year has been formalizing its partnerships with two more of the nation's 17 Department of Energy labs—Argonne National Laboratory in Illinois and Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee. A defining feature of the partnership between LSU and Argonne National Laboratory is a robust faculty, student, staff and postdoctoral exchange program, through which LSU team members will gain hands-on training at Argonne while Argonne staff scientists will engage directly with LSU, including at statewide research sites and test beds and with LSU's energy industry partners. Last summer, LSU became the first university in the nation to partner with Idaho National Laboratory, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, and the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate on a **unique model** for cybersecurity training and research to defend industrial control systems. As part of this model, Idaho National Laboratory researchers built a test bed—the first of its kind on a university campus—known as the Tiger Skid, which is now in operation on LSU's campus in Baton Rouge.
- Chemical engineer Bhuvnesh Bharti's lab recently invented a low-cost foam that physically traps microplastics of any size, shape, or composition. Microplastics, tiny pieces of plastic broken down from plastic containers and waste, are increasingly an environmental and public health concern and are particularly challenging to remove from water because they are so small and they have diverse chemical properties. The researchers had the idea of physically trapping microplastics between air bubbles and microtubules within a special fatty acid foam derived from castor oil. The removal process, which has a cumulative removal efficiency of 85% through multiple foaming cycles, is as simple as adding foaming components into a solution of water and microplastics and then vigorously shaking.
- On February 25, the LSU Office of Academic Affairs and the LSU Faculty Senate hosted *Teaching at Scale: Engaging Students in Large-Enrollment Classes*, a campus-wide panel focused on strengthening student engagement in high-enrollment courses. The event was funded through a grant from the **Louisiana Board of Regents**, which established **LSU's Geaux Further Initiative**, an effort designed to enhance student learning outcomes through collaborative course redesign, teaching innovation, and evidence-based instructional practices. The initiative supports faculty in integrating active learning, career-connected experiences, and workforce-aligned approaches into foundational courses that serve as academic gateways for students, helping improve both engagement and long-term success. Attendees had the opportunity to learn directly from colleagues who have demonstrated excellence in teaching large-enrollment courses and to participate in a Q&A that encouraged dialogue across disciplines. The session was recorded and will be made available as a resource for faculty and graduate teaching assistants seeking to enhance engagement and learning outcomes in their own classrooms. I thank faculty panelists Dan Capron, Maribel Dietz, Zakiya S. Wilson-Kennedy, and David Young for their helpful guidance and Dr. Jennifer Baumgartner and Vice Provost Jacqueline Bach for their efforts in organizing the event.