

LSU Council of Faculty Advisors Meeting

September 5, 2025
LSU University Administration Building
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808

-Approved-

I. Call to order.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Members present: Daniel Tirone (LSUA&M) - Chair, Suresh Alahari (LSU Health New Orleans), Rachelle Brown, (LSUE), Kevin McCarter (LSU Ag), Robert Newton (PBRC), Dawn Sonnier (LSU Health Shreveport) and Cynthia Thomas (LSUA).

Members absent: Cassandra Williams (LSUS)

III. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

IV. Approval of Minutes from June 27, 2025 meeting

The minutes were approved without amendments.

V. Special Orders

Chair Tirone notified members about the election of Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary of CoFA. Brown moved to hold elections for the Chair. Passed unanimously. Tirone self-nominated for the Chair. There were no other nominations from the floor. Tirone was elected Chair unanimously.

Thomas moved to hold elections for the Vice Chair. Tirone mentioned that Williams has self-nominated for this position. Alahari was additional nominee from the floor. Alahari was elected as Vice Chair.

Sonnier moved to elect Secretary. There were no nominations. Brown moved to appoint Singh (alternate LSU A&M) as Pro Tem Secretary for the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

VI . New Business

The Chair went over the items that will be included in the campus reports for the CoFA faculty representative in the Board of Supervisors meeting. The full report items are included in an attachment.

The Chair also discussed draft of accreditation standards proposed by the new Commission for Public Higher Education (CPHE). Committee members discussed challenges for accreditation agencies and need of input from various campuses.

Provost Blanchard stopped by the meeting and thanked everyone for their service.

Chairman Ballard also stopped by and expressed his gratitude to the faculty group for their dedicated service. Alahari expressed concerns about the lack of faculty representation from LSU HS in the Presidential Search Committee.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 am following a motion by Brown.

Minutes prepared by Parampreet Singh (alternate LSU A&M) Pro Tem Secretary.

Attachments:

LSU Council of Faculty Advisors Report Sep 5, 2025

LSU Council of Faculty Advisors Report

September 5, 2025

Assembled by Daniel C. Tirone, Chair

LSU AgCenter

- **Marybeth Lima**, LSU Department of Biological & Agricultural Engineering Chair was inducted as a *Fellow* into the *American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE)*.
- **Christine Coker**, is the new LSU AgCenter **state vegetable specialist, horticulture extension agent for southeast Louisiana**, and the **Hammond Research Station research coordinator**.
- **Evelyn Watts**, School of Nutrition & Food Sciences was *awarded the GRACE DREWS LEHMAN PROFESSORSHIP* in Human Ecology.
- The LSU AgCenter was awarded 45 grants in July and August that totaled **\$3,272,579**.
- **Dr. Todd Tarifa**, Associate Extension Director of Youth Development, 4-H & FFA, was awarded the **Meraux Foundation Supreme Champion Livestock Professorship** supporting the AgCenter State Livestock Show & livestock research & related projects, including animal husbandry, selection, genetics, nutrition, health, economics and marketing.
- **Gavin Sparks**, Master's Student of Dr. Conner Webster, **was the first-place individual student** out of 109 students representing 13 universities and the **first LSU Student** to win the top award at the **Southern Weed Science Society Contest**.

LSU Alexandria

- LSUA has welcomed 13 new faculty members for the 2025–2026 academic year. This expansion helps relieve the pressure created by recent growth in both campus-based and online programs. The New Faculty Orientation, along with professional development opportunities offered through the Center for Teaching Excellence, proved to be engaging, robust, and highly successful.
- Enrollment is projected to remain around 7,600 students for the fall semester. Online enrollment has grown significantly, increasing by nearly 30%, while on-campus enrollment has risen by almost 10%. Dual Enrollment numbers have declined slightly. This year's freshman class will be the largest in LSUA history, with more than 600 students enrolled, including over 500 campus-based freshmen. In addition, LSUA welcomed 300 residents to campus housing. We are also excited that LSUA will break ground on additional campus housing on September 16th at 9:00.
- All Dean positions are now filled with permanent appointments, giving each college stable leadership. We are excited about the vision these deans bring to their colleges and how their goals align with the broader mission of the university. The final two vacancies in the College of Business and the College of Social Sciences were filled by promoting internal faculty members into leadership roles, reflecting LSUA's commitment to recognizing and advancing talent from within our own academic community.
- LSUA is proud to expand its commitment to military-affiliated students through a new partnership with the United States Army Garrison at Fort Polk. Building on our designation as a Gold Level Military Friendly School, this agreement formally establishes an educational collaboration designed to serve active-duty personnel, veterans, retirees, and their families, as well as the broader Fort Polk community. As part of this partnership, LSUA will begin offering classes directly on the base to better support the academic and professional goals of those who serve.
- A new tradition has also begun at LSUA with the lighting of the campus tower. Incoming freshmen will now walk through the tower as they start their academic journey, and again at graduation, facing outward toward the next stage of their lives. This symbolic tradition celebrates both beginnings and completions in a student's journey.
- Finally, LSUA and LSU Health Shreveport have partnered to launch an accelerated 3+3 degree pathway in Occupational Therapy. This innovative program enables students to complete a Bachelor of Science in Biology or Kinesiology at LSUA and a Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) at LSUHS School of Health Professions and Sciences in just six years.

LSU Eunice

Faculty Features

LSUE Welcomes Dr. Charles Stewart as the **Interim Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Provost**.

Faculty Publications, Professional Awards and Honors

Michael Ray Taylor—History Instructor—Two publications:

- Taylor, M.R., "Review of Moderate Liberalism and the Scottish Enlightenment: Montesquieu, Hume, Smith and Ferguson, by Constantine Christos Vassiliou." *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 104.1, April 3, 2025, pgs. 148-149.
- Forthcoming: Taylor, M.R., "'Ancient Natives': A Competitive Jacobite Defence of Indigenous Society and Ethical Colonisation." *Scottish Church History*, Edinburgh University Press, to be printed October 9, 2025.

Summer Ford—Psychology Assistant Professor:

- Presented at the St. Landry Parish Exceptional Student Services Summer Symposium: "Seeing Clearly: Understanding Implicit Bias and Its Impact on Special Educators."
- Guest Speaker at New Life Baptist Church of God's Back to School Service
- Presented at Louisiana Department of Health 2025 Pediatric and Perinatal TeleCHO Series on "Individualized Education Programs, 504 Plans, and School Collaboration."

Symantha (ART) and Robert Jones (ENGL):

- Will be presenting in September at the European Beat Studies conference in Germany. Symantha also has a publication forthcoming in issue of *Arts to Hearts* magazine.

General Program and Campus Achievements

All 30 graduates of LSU Eunice's **Radiologic Technology** program have successfully passed the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (AART) national certification exam on their first attempt. This 100% pass rate is the highest first-time pass rate in program history.

Diagnostic Medical Sonography: 8 graduates, all dual registered in Abdomen and OB/Gyn, and all employed before graduation.

Surgical Technology: First students to graduate from the Alexandria cohort (both accepted employment in that region). 18 total graduates from the Lafayette and Alexandria instructional sites. All have passed their boards and are certified. **Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Fire and Emergency Services** has a new online pathway through LSUE and LSU Online. After finishing the associate, eligible students can transfer seamlessly into the fully-online Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Fire and Emergency Services Administration (FESA) from LSU.

2025 Fall semester is breaking records for registration and total credit hours demonstrating the dedication of recruiting, registration, student success, financial aid, IT and every academic division to make this possible.

LSUE athletics 2024-2025 academic year garnered 58 NJCAA All-Academic Student-Athletes. Athletics score a 3.28 cumulative GPA, 58 Academic All-Americans, 8 student-athletes received a 4.0 GPA!

LSU Health New Orleans

School of Medicine (SOM)

- The Director of NCI, Dr. Douglas Lowy, and the Director, NCI Office of Cancer Centers, Dr. Krzysztof Ptak, visited our campus to discuss our path towards NCI designation for LSU Health New Orleans.
- In alignment with Dr. Nelson's work on the NCI initiative, the School of Medicine has recruited a new Chief of Hematology-Oncology and is actively recruiting several other high-level clinicians and scientists who will play important roles in the Cancer Center. Additionally, a major renovation of nearly 200,000 square feet of lab space is on schedule to be completed in early 2026. This will help us recruit top scientists to the faculty.
- A proposal entitled "Compassion in Motion: Training Tailored Communication across the Clinical Continuum" has been selected for funding of 1.1 million dollars by American Medical Association. This was selected from 200 competitive applications. This project is led by Drs. Peter Deblieux and Rachel Fiore and partnered with University of New Orleans Department of Computer Science Professor Ben Samuel. In this application they proposed an education model utilizing AI generated patients and AI coaches to enhance student and resident communications. This study will move medical education at the LSU Health New Orleans to a national audience.

School of Nursing (SON)

For the nursing school, they have admitted 33 students to our Off Campus Instructional Site in Baton Rouge.

School of Public Health (SoPH)

SoPH will be submitting its Self-Study to our accrediting agency (CEPH) next month (September 2025)

Faculty Updates

- Dr. Evrim Oral (Biostatistics) was elected Vice Chair for District 5 on the American Statistical Association's Council of Chapters Governing Board.
- Dr. Tekeda Ferguson was elected as the Fellow Director of American College of Epidemiology (ACE)

Pennington Biomedical Research Center

- The annual Men's Health Summit was held August 23rd and welcomed more than 350 participants, volunteers and sponsors to Pennington Biomedical. The attendance is a 19% increase from 2024. The Center hosted 26 exhibitors and nonprofits, 44 individuals signed up for clinical trials and more than 1,200 health screenings were conducted – a 52% increase from 2024.
- Pennington Biomedical's [Greux Healthy initiative](#) has begun a statewide tour to reach all Louisiana communities. Greux Healthy is a public service initiative powered by Pennington Biomedical Research Center, in partnership with the State of Louisiana, focused on preventing and treating childhood obesity. Drawing from over 35 years of scientific research, Greux Healthy creates evidence-based tools, resources, and programs that promote better health for children of all ages. Each component empowers families, educators, healthcare providers, and communities with proven practices to prevent and treat childhood obesity and build a healthier future for Louisiana's children. They have visited the Baton Rouge, Shreveport and Monroe areas, their next visit will be to the Alexandria area at the end of September and the New Orleans areas in October.
- The [Advanced Endocrinology and Diabetes Clinic](#) is open and seeing patients at Pennington Biomedical. The opening of the outpatient endocrinology and diabetes clinic allows Pennington Biomedical to move from research to prevention to detection and now the treatment of chronic endocrine diseases. The clinic provides specialized care for patients managing diabetes and endocrine disorders, bringing world-class expertise to the region. Only a few months after it formally launched, the Advanced Endocrinology and Diabetes Clinic is officially accredited by the Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists. Leading the clinic is Timothy Gilbert, MD, endocrinologist and Lake Charles native. He joins Pennington Biomedical with nearly 20 years of private practice experience in Southwest Louisiana. Dr. Gilbert earned his medical degree from Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans, followed by an internal medicine residency at LSUHSC Baton Rouge and a fellowship in Endocrinology and Metabolic Disease at Ochsner Health Systems.

LSU Health Shreveport

Faculty Senate

- Elected new Faculty Senate officers for 2025–26
- Collaborated with Interim Chancellor Dr. Lester Johnson to review and modernize Faculty Senate bylaws and committee structures

Research Update

- Achieved a record-breaking year in research growth and impact under the leadership of Dr. Oren Rom, Dr. John Vanchiere, and Dr. Ramey Banfield.
- Secured over \$24 million in external research funding, a 13.3% increase over FY24—marking the largest year-over-year growth since FY18, despite national reductions in federal funding.
- Recruited 14 new research faculty from top-tier institutions, bringing \$20 million in new NIH funding to North Louisiana and significantly expanding research capacity.
- Submitted 200 grant proposals to more than 30 funding agencies, demonstrating broad engagement and competitiveness.
- Selected as a new site for the U.S. Department of Defense’s National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) Pilot Program. A Congressionally authorized program led by the National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health (NCDMPH).
- Rebuilding the innovation pipeline through the Office for Innovation and Commercialization, focusing on strategic partnerships, commercialization pathways, and cross-campus collaboration to strengthen LSU’s system-wide innovation ecosystem.
- Initiated planning for a new state-of-the-art research facility at the former Sears property (Mall St. Vincent), in partnership with the LSUHS Foundation, to support continued growth in research infrastructure.
- Committed to ongoing investment in interdisciplinary initiatives, early-career investigators, and research infrastructure to sustain momentum and expand scientific impact across Louisiana and beyond.

School of Graduate Studies

- Matriculated the largest incoming class to date:
 - 11 MSMS students
 - 28 research students
 - Total: 39 graduate students
- Strategic goal set to achieve R2 research university status:
 - Research expenditures criterion already met
 - Focus now on increasing annual PhD graduates to 20+ annually
 - Classes continue to increase and new efforts are being made to encourage faculty mentorship in order to meet this goal
- Launched the Shreveport Teacher Enhancement Program (STEP):
 - Provides education theory and teaching experience to students and postdocs
 - Aims to improve trainees job market competitiveness and confidence in pursuing teaching careers
- Introduced the Postdoctoral Researcher Enhancement Program (PREP):
 - Offers structured career development support for postdoctoral fellows
 - Aligns with national best practices for postdoctoral training

School of Health Professions & Sciences

- Continued academic excellence affirmed through Spring 2025 accreditation visits:
 - Cardiopulmonary Science – Accreditation confirmed
 - Psychology Doctoral Internship Program – Accreditation reaffirmed
 - Communication Disorders (Speech-Language Pathology Program) – Reaffirmed with *no citations* and *no recommendations*
- Established new academic partnerships through MOUs:
 - LSUS – 2+2 agreements for Cardiopulmonary Science, Cardiovascular Technology, and Medical Laboratory Science programs
 - LSUA – 3+3 agreement for the Occupational Therapy Doctoral program

School of Medicine

- Dr. Chen Lin, MD, MBA, appointed Chair of the Department of Neurology. He joins LSU Health Shreveport from UAB, bringing expertise in stroke recovery and neuro-rehabilitation.
- LSUHS alumna Dr. Cynthia Noguera has returned to Shreveport after completing advanced fellowship training in oculofacial plastic and reconstructive surgery. She is now the only ASOPRS-trained oculoplastic surgeon in North Louisiana, bringing highly specialized care to the region.
- LSUHS welcomed 177 new residents and fellows across 47 accredited training programs, reinforcing its commitment to excellence in graduate medical education.
- LSUHS was recognized as the #2 enrollment site nationally for the GRNDaD Sickle Cell Registry, a multisite initiative collecting long-term data to better understand how clinical characteristics influence outcomes in individuals with sickle cell disease.
- LSUHS hosted multiple summer research programs for undergraduate and graduate students, fostering early scientific development.

LSU Shreveport

- Student government President **Devesh Sarda** became the first LSUS student to represent all college students statewide as the student representative to the Louisiana Board of Regents.
- Computer science faculty **Dr. Subhajit Chakrabarty** is leading a lab in **artificial intelligence and machine learning** that continues to receive national recognition. Master's and undergraduate students won a first-place research poster award on automatic spine segmentation at the national AIM-AHEAD annual meeting in July. Eight students also presented at the Intermountain Engineering, Technology and Computing Conference.
- Faculty members **Melinda Cassel, Laura Meiki, Rogers Martin and Adrienne Davis** are spearheading the charge to implement the Meauxmentum Framework on LSUS's campus. The quartet organized learning sessions to encourage high impact practices and modernize faculty instruction to meet the needs of today's student.
- **Dr. Allen Grant**, new dean of the College of Education and Human Development, played a critical role in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as an administrator with Louisiana's Virtual School. The LVS pioneered online education both to displaced students but also to overburdened school systems in North Louisiana, offering a variety of courses but particularly AP, foreign language, and other advanced courses to students who wouldn't have had access.
- Students have an easier pathway to **three LSU Health Shreveport bachelor's degrees** through an MOU signing with its medical neighbor. Students can start at LSUS and seamlessly transition to programs in Cardiovascular Technology, Cardiopulmonary Science and Medical Laboratory Science at LSU Health.
- LSUS was the center of the nuclear world as the host of the **Nuclear Triad Symposium**, which attracted hundreds of the nation's top defense industry personnel to Shreveport in June.
- LSUS broke its **summer enrollment** record for the second straight summer (8,006) and is the fourth straight semester of record-breaking enrollment.
- Baseball coach **Brad Neffendorf** won various Coach of the Year honors, including at the NAIA level and at the national level, regardless of division. He captured the Skip Bertman Coach of the Year, which is the national baseball coaching award.
- LSUS Fishing placed two boats in the top 50 at the Bassmaster College national championships, capping another top-10 season.
- The **Institute of Nonprofit Administration and Research** opened a new resource center in July where nonprofit leaders can interact and access research resources.
- History professor **Dr. Alexander Mikaberidze** presented in Oxford, England, in early June on the global impact of the Napoleonic Wars and the Eastern Georgian Monarchy in the 18th Century.

LSU A&M

- President Lee and Provost Blanchard both attended the Faculty Senate meeting on August 27, offering welcoming remarks and fielding questions from the faculty. The visits were very successful, with those in attendance appreciating the opportunity to engage with both leaders and their candor in their remarks and responses. We look forward to having them join us again in the future.
- LSU's rapidly growing cybersecurity program, which earned the nation's top designation as a Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Operations (CAE-CO) by the National Security Agency (NSA) in 2022, has received a highly competitive \$2.4 million award from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The new funding will allow LSU to continue and expand its CyberCorps Scholarship for Service (SFS) program, the largest effort in U.S. history to educate highly technical cyber warriors for national security careers. As the name of the program suggests, students receive scholarships—\$27,000 per year for undergraduate students and \$37,000 per year for graduate students—for up to three years in return for equal-time, paid government service after graduation. Students, who must be U.S. citizens, also get free tuition and a professional allowance of \$6,000 per year for equipment, travel, certifications, and supplies. It is also notable that a majority of the students in the program are from Louisiana.
- Five LSU faculty members have been awarded the National Science Foundation's most competitive grant for early-career researchers. They are Assistant Professors Sviatoslav Baranets and Amy Xu (Chemistry), Christopher Marvel (Mechanical Engineering), and Nicholas Mason (Museum of Natural Science), along with the recently promoted Associate Professor Olufemi Olorode (Petroleum Engineering). With five awardees in the past year, LSU ranks in the top third among Southeastern Conference (SEC) universities.
- A collaborative team of researchers in the Cain Department of Chemical Engineering and the Department of Oceanography and Coastal Sciences at LSU has won a first-of-its-kind grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to bring 10 of the country's most brilliant research students to LSU to pursue a Ph.D. and emerge as leaders in energy and environmental science. The project, Widening the Nation's STEM Workforce in Louisiana (WIN-WIN), has been awarded \$1.6 million through the NSF's new EPSCoR Graduate Fellows Program (EGFP). This brand-new program extends the impact of the agency's highly competitive Graduate Research Fellows Program (GRFP). It provides states and territories that historically have received a smaller share of federal research funding, such as Louisiana, with an opportunity to attract and retain top talent. Students who apply to the GRFP program and receive an honorable mention immediately become eligible for the EGFP program.
- Juhee Haam, assistant professor of biological sciences, has won a five-year, \$1.8 million R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health to investigate how brain regions exchange information and form memories. Her primary focus is on the entorhinal cortex, which moves memories between short-term storage in the hippocampus and long-term storage in the neocortex. She hopes to reveal principles that apply not only to Alzheimer's disease but to memory function across the lifespan.