Faculty-to-Faculty Mentoring:
The Role of the Department Chair

Mentoring encompasses the most important learning and development function for faculty members as they progress in their careers. All faculty members learn and grow in their work by observing and engaging with more experienced members of their profession.

Stanford schools and departments are expected to have policies and practices to provide mentoring to early career faculty, who need and gain ongoing support, advice, and feedback concerning their scholarly work; given differences in academic disciplinary structures and cultures, these policies and practices vary across the university.

The role of the Chair:
1. Department chairs, or deans or their delegates, should **confer annually with each early career faculty member to provide counseling**, i.e., feedback on the faculty member's performance relative to the standards for reappointment or promotion. Comparative and predictive aspects of tenure or promotion decisions should be addressed as fully as possible.
2. In general, it is recommended that early career faculty be assigned mentors who are senior faculty members but not department chairs. Align selection of a mentor with departmental objectives for mentoring and with the anticipated needs of the early career faculty member.
3. The chair should **clarify expectations for the mentoring relationship**:
   - What are the objectives for the mentoring relationship?
   - How often are the mentor and protégé expected to meet? (once/quarter minimum is recommended)
   - How will the mentor's evaluative role as a senior member of the department impact and inform the mentoring?
   - How will the mentor help to ensure that the faculty member is supported by the department as best possible?
   - How will the mentor foster important connections and visibility?
   - How will the mentor provide constructive and supportive feedback on specific work or on career progress?
4. It may be helpful to provide examples of the kinds of topics for discussion likely to be most useful to early career faculty development, e.g:
   - Performance evaluation: information about promotion and tenure processes, reviewing the Faculty Handbook along with related school and departmental policies and processes; responding to questions about expectations
   - Research: establishing, pacing, publishing, important conferences, Stanford resources to support research, grant sources; strategies for funding, grant management.
   - Teaching: departmental assignments and expectations, policies and practices, teaching assistants and related policies, resources, e.g. Center for Teaching and Learning, Hume Writing Center, etc.
   - Advising and guiding graduate students and/or postdocs, e.g. policies and practices, how to recruit, select, supervise, motivate, evaluate, establishing research group norms if applicable
   - Assistants: department assistance and support, interactions with staff, supervisory practices if applicable
   - Service: appropriate assignments for pre-tenure faculty inside and outside the University
   - Clinical practice and performance, where applicable

In situations in which the initial mentor assignment is not successful, department chairs or deans are advised to work with the early career faculty member to identify a more suitable mentor.

Early career faculty members are encouraged to engage with multiple mentors, and to seek informal mentors from inside and outside their department who may share interests and provide additional perspectives.

Further guidance: https://facultydevelopment.stanford.edu/faculty-development/mentoring-guidelines-and-resources