

USM Faculty Mentoring Guidelines

August 2025

The following mentoring guidelines offer suggestions and set expectations for the mentorship process for new faculty members. This document is meant to offer a starting point for these relationships in ideal situations where departmental resources are available. Mentorship expectations should evolve to meet the needs of junior faculty in the context of their department.

Senior Faculty Mentor Expectations for New Tenure-Track Hires

Senior Faculty Mentors are more advanced senior faculty who are tasked with helping new tenure-track hires develop their program of research and scholarship and support teaching excellence. The goal with these mentoring relationships is to allow the junior faculty member the opportunity to benefit from regular, supportive contact with a successful, advanced colleague. It is recommended that Senior Faculty Mentors continue to provide mentorship through at least the Pre-Tenure Review process. However, mentorship can be renegotiated with the Director, mentor, and new faculty member annually. Senior Faculty Mentors should:

- Demonstrate openness to diverse perspectives and to actively uphold and respect the academic freedom of their mentees.
- Maintain a responsive and collaborative approach by providing thoughtful answers to questions and working jointly with mentees to explore and identify appropriate solutions.
- Share personal insights, experiences, and opinions only after clearly distinguishing these from institutional policies or universally accepted practices.
- Initiate discussion on the expectations of the mentoring relationship between the mentor and mentee.
- Discuss the [school's promotion and tenure document](#) and annual evaluation rubric as well as expectations for pre-tenure review with the mentee. Ideally, this topic should be addressed within the first semester.
- Work collaboratively with the mentee to set both short- and long-term goals aligned with their professional development. These goals should be reached based on discussion and considering other demands on the mentee's schedule. Mentors should encourage their mentees to develop specific milestones on a trajectory that will lead to a successful pre-tenure review and beyond. They should identify and build on mentees' strengths. Writing these goals down on a shared document may be helpful in ensuring both parties are on the same page and assist with keeping track of progress.
- Monitor mentee's progress regularly and set new goals as necessary, providing regular feedback on mentee's progress, while offering constructive criticism as well as praise and support.
- Mentors should share examples and resources to support mentor's research and scholarly activities. Helpful information may include details on forming research teams or labs, securing

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publications, pursuing both internal and external funding, assisting with supervising the faculty member's first thesis/ dissertation project, navigating university grant support systems, and providing guidance regarding goals that lead to successful pre-tenure review, promotion, and tenure.

- Initiate conversation on their teaching. Mentors are encouraged to provide opportunities to support mentee's success in teaching. For example, a mentor may offer to provide a peer evaluation of a class session, review their student course evaluations with them, give advice on syllabi and course assessments, discuss [high impact teaching practices](#), and share instructional resources as needed.
- Discuss what service is appropriate for a junior faculty member and how much is expected for successful pre-tenure review and tenure.
- Direct the mentee to appropriate resources in their school, college and university, such as the [Center for Faculty Development](#), to support their goals.

Senior Faculty Mentor Expectations for new Teaching-Track Hires

For new teaching-track hires, Senior Faculty Mentors are tasked with helping to support new teaching-track faculty to establish themselves at USM and prepare for promotion. Senior Faculty Mentors should help establish goals that are consistent with the promotion guidelines for teaching-track faculty that help facilitate eventual success in seeking promotion. Junior colleagues may wish to discuss progress toward professional development, goals aligned with promotion expectations, and teaching and service experiences with their mentor. The goal with these mentoring relationships is to allow the junior faculty member the opportunity to benefit from regular, supportive contact with a successful, advanced colleague. It is recommended that Senior Faculty Mentors continue to provide mentorship through at least the first few years of employment; however, mentorship can be renegotiated with the Director, mentor, and new faculty member annually. Senior Faculty Mentors should:

- Demonstrate openness to diverse perspectives and to actively uphold and respect the academic freedom of their mentees.
- Maintain a responsive and collaborative approach by providing thoughtful answers to questions and working jointly with mentees to explore and identify appropriate solutions.
- Share personal insights, experiences, and opinions only after clearly distinguishing these from institutional policies or universally accepted practices.
- Initiate discussion on the expectations that you and your mentee have for this mentoring relationship.
- Review [school documents](#) on promotion for teaching-track faculty and the annual evaluation rubric. Ideally, this conversation should take place within the first semester of the new hire's employment.
- Work collaboratively with the mentee to set both short- and long-term goals aligned with their professional development. These goals should be reached based on discussion and considering other demands on the mentee's schedule. Mentors should encourage their mentee to develop specific milestones on a trajectory that will lead to a successful annual review and promotion review. They should also help the mentee identify and build on their strengths. Writing these goals down on a shared document may be helpful in ensuring both parties are on the same page and assist with keeping track of progress.

- Monitor mentee's progress regularly and set new goals as necessary, providing regular feedback on mentee's progress, while offering constructive criticism as well as praise and support.
- Provide opportunities to support mentee's success in teaching. For example, mentors may offer to provide a peer evaluation of a class session, review their student course evaluations with them, give advice on syllabi and course assessments, discuss [high impact teaching practices](#), and share instructional resources as needed.
- Discuss what service is appropriate for a junior faculty member and how much is expected for teaching-track faculty and activities that are aligned with their goals and interests.
- Direct mentees to appropriate resources in your school, college and university, such as the [Center for Faculty Development](#), to support their goals.

Peer Faculty Mentor Expectations

Peer Faculty Mentors are selected from early-career faculty to assist new hires with the transition throughout the first year as a faculty member at USM. Peer Faculty Mentors can be useful in helping with daily tasks and can be a resource for understanding school, college, or university practices. Peer Faculty Mentors can offer advice and guidance around teaching, service, and living/working in the area. The goal with these mentorship relationships is to create a sense of community and acculturate new faculty to USM. Peer Faculty Mentors are engaged in official mentoring throughout the first academic year (fall – summer) of their mentee. Peer Faculty Mentors should:

- Maintain a responsive and collaborative approach by providing thoughtful answers to questions and working jointly with mentees to explore and identify appropriate solutions.
- Share personal insights, experiences, and opinions only after clearly distinguishing these from institutional policies or universally accepted practices.
- Share their availability with the mentee and encourage the mentee to seek support as needed.
- At minimum, attend the Peer Mentor Lunch during New Faculty Orientation and connect with their mentee at least 1-2 times each semester during the first year.
- Connect the mentee to resources on campus and within the School/College as needed to support their success.
- Redirect the mentee to their Senior Faculty Mentor or School Director as needed for support if you are unsure of the answer to their questions or needs.

Suggested Activities:

- Invite your mentee to university events to provide more opportunities to acculturate to USM and build connections.
- Invite your mentee to join you for lunch or coffee occasionally or along with other colleagues to help build their sense of community in your school.

Mentee Expectations

The following expectations are offered for junior faculty to help facilitate a beneficial mentoring experience.

- Be actively involved in the mentorship process, as the more effort devoted to this process the more helpful it will be.
- Be prepared for meetings with senior mentor, coming with questions, progress on goals, or other concerns.
- Be open to feedback on your progress and goals and ask for clarification if you are unsure of the feedback you receive from your mentors or others.

Logistics to be Addressed by both Mentors and Mentees

- Set expectations for frequency and length of meetings (e.g., weekly, biweekly, monthly, etc)
- Discuss who is responsible for scheduling meetings.
- It is strongly suggested that USM email is the primary means for communication. Other means of communication (e.g., cell phone/text, Teams chat, etc) should be agreed upon both the mentor and mentee on their use, or circumstances for their use.
- Mentors or mentees are not expected to be available to discuss work-related matters, even those pertaining to the progress of the mentee, outside of normal working hours.

School Director Expectations

- School directors should assist the Office of the Provost with assigning mentors for new faculty members.
- Directors should help convene a meeting between each Mentor & Mentee each semester.