Please share any strategies that you have found useful to take a proactive role in your own mentoring:

Take advantage of departmental or institutional resources to better understand my career aspirations. Carefully evaluate areas that need the most growth and identify multiple mentors who fulfill my different mentoring needs.

The graduate students in my lab organize an informal chat hour every two weeks which has been really important in enforcing support networks among us students. We talk about our experiments and other challenges we have and problem-solve together, as well as share strategies on how to best use our limited time with our advisor and work with other members of the lab. It has greatly improved my time in the lab!

When rotating in my lab, it was clear that mentorship was relatively hands-off and often you have to ask for what you need. I knew that I was someone that was comfortable with this, so I am very open and direct in my communication with my PI. I feel listened to and given assistance when/where I request.

When particularly frustrated, I can walk into my advisor's office and share that 1) I am frustrated and 2) that I need their assistance. By setting expectations, my advisor can adjust their mentorship to suit the current situation.

When I prepare for my one-on-one meetings with my PI I plan/prioritize based on what feedback I need most.

Soliciting outside feedback on my project. Being more deliberate and specific with soliciting project feedback.

Setting up set meeting times, preparing slides for 1:1 meetings, proactively meeting with cores and other PIs to discuss ideas, proactively reaching out to other grad students to learn from them

Scheduling regular meetings with my advisor and coming into those meetings with a plan of what I need to talk about.

Relying on other trainees in the lab or advice/solidarity

Regular IDP discussions

Preparing for meetings with an agenda: bring a slide deck, action items, timelines -- things like that! It will help you focus your meetings and get actionable feedback from your PI.

Prepare a list of discussion topics before meeting with my mentor

Taking MIT biology department mentoring seminars

My PI has 'office hours' instead of pre-defined 1-on-1 meeting times. I found that I was overthinking how frequently to meet with them, so instead set myself a recurring fortnightly meeting to share updates/data/plans.

Meet with my advisor on a regular, scheduled basis to discuss week, month, and year goals.

Manage upwards

Making sure I am not afraid to speak up, that communication is a two-way street!

Make a list of professional and interpersonal development goals I have for myself for the duration of the PhD. share these with my PI to help them mentor me. For each goal, go into that conversation with at least one idea of how to work towards it so that we can have a starting point for those conversations

Maintaining regularly scheduled meetings and coming to meeting with specific questions in mind

It is useful to have very honest conversations if your PI is open to it, and it is especially useful to employ checks for understanding to ensure that you and your PI are on the same page.

Initiate discussions on what are my weaknesses and how I could improve. Thinking of what I would like to achieve. consult my PI in what I should do to achieve my goals and take action.

I've started journaling regularly so I can better understand my own goals and desires, then spend some independent time looking into how to achieve those goals and desires before I bring them to my PI. I find that it's more productive to bring some kind of solutions, or at least starting points, to the table, rather than just bringing questions and thoughts. I also try to be pretty direct about the goals I want to hit, and what my advisor can/can't do to help. In turn, I also directly ask them if they feel this path is feasible and matches their knowledge of me.

I understand the strengths and limitations of my advisor. Where they are limited, I proactively seek mentorship from other individuals. I tailor our meetings to their strengths, which helps us both get the most out of meeting. I am not afraid to ask for help (scientific, professional, interpersonal, or otherwise). I also understand that different mentors have different competencies in supporting these areas.

I try to come to meetings with both updates and specific action items. If I need specific input to make a decision, I will ask for that input and be clear that it's a bottleneck to proceeding. I had to learn to take a lack of opinion as trust in me to consult with the right people and make an informed choice myself.

I make sure to be as straightforward and concise as possible with my desires. I find that clearly and firmly expressing what I would like from my advisor is important.

I look for career development workshops at MIT and at conferences

I like doing the IDP, I find it useful to have an environment when my advisor is in the mood to receive feedback.

I know that I will get better/more helpful answers if I make much more direct asks of my advisor. For example, "when should i get this done by" will not get a helpful response. Better for my advisor is "This is when I will get this done by. and these specific items are what I need from you."

I initially sought out mentorship from my primary and secondary mentors, but realized early on that they didn't provide the kind of actionable feedback that helped me in any way.

I have found that when my advisor is excited about an idea but I don't think the timeline is feasible, it's not very effective to tell my advisor "I don't think I have the time/bandwidth to do x". What's instead worked for me is sitting down and laying out a timeline, and trying to decide together on priorities. I did this for my graduation timeline, where we established when I wanted to graduate and then I worked backward with my advisor for when I would need to start writing, etc, and we were able to agree on what was actually possible for me to get done in the time I had before defending.

I have been clear about my career goals and places where I felt I needed help to achieve them.

I have been applying to different conferences and awards that I see or get notified about from friends

I ensure I have regular meetings with my PI. Before each meeting, I determine the aspects of my research on which my PI's feedback are most needed. Outside of meetings, I send slack messages with important questions/updates. I explicitly asked my PI about things that were important to me for my project: being able to be co-mentored, have collaborators, have subgroup meetings, and about specific opportunities like workshops, conferences, etc.

I ask for the type of feedback that it would be helpful for me to receive (eg specific feedback on experimental design vs thoughts about overall strategy). Fortunately my advisor is willing to focus their feedback on the areas I've requested help with

I am proactive to find potential opportunities of interest (ex. applying for fellowships or grants, specific conferences I want to attend) and bringing them to my advisor, rather than waiting for my advisor to recommend that I apply to different opportunities. I also

ask during each scientific meeting if there is anything that they think I could improve on or learn that would be helpful for my growth to solicit specific feedback about my improving on my weaknesses.

Having slides during one-on-one meetings. Introducing ideas new and potentially contradicting ideas during lab meetings where opinions vary and more productive discussions occur. Scheduling meetings in advance and ensuring they are accounted for on all parties' calendars

Focus on being an exemplar of every admirable trait you see in others, and everything else will follow naturally. It is better to focus on long term growth than to take the easy and comfortable way out by hiding from your problems and weaknesses, or pretend to be dealing with them by commiserating with friends and blaming others, because without rectifying them you will both continue having to deal with the problems and also be limited in your ultimate potential. A person who is unwilling to learn and grow will be a bad student, a bad mentor, and a bad manager later in life.

Find multiple mentors. This can be within your lab (senior grad students, postdocs, lab managers) and outside your lab too. I found it really helpful to find people both in our department and beyond (such as at conferences) with expertise in different areas that I now feel I can turn to for scientific and personal input. Your PI's availability will change and they can't be the best at everything so having more people is really important.

Don't wait to be asked if you'd like to do something/presented an opportunity. Actively seek out opportunities that are relevant to you and propose those to your advisor.

Don't be afraid to ask questions!

Continuously seek learning opportunities outside of the lab and implement use case scenarios as needed in lab

Coming into meetings with slides that lay out my agenda/goals for the meeting, so we have something to facilitate the conversation.

Clear agenda for each meeting.

Bringing up specific priorities directly (e.g. i want to apply for XX fellowship for YY reason). Asking for support directly (I want to go to ZZ conference).

Being very honest about your goals and expectations , having less Ego and more flexibility with uncertainties

Being open with others in my community about what good mentorship experiences look like so we can all establish standards and seek help when needed!

Being direct with my advisor about what I need help with and require more mentoring in.

Be open and genuine! You have a lot to offer just as you are, and that's why you are here! It's more than OK not to know things, especially given how specialized we (PhD researchers) are in our areas of academic focus. Progress happens on interfaces, so my most productive conversations I have had around research have involved a lot of people with disparate areas of expertise from my own.

I aim first to be approachable and friendly, then build a real relationship with my mentee as person (not only as a scientist/engineer, but as an individual with multifaceted interested), and then finally collaborate on technical objectives. Understanding the diversity the person you are collaborating with is simply the first (sometimes overlooked) step to doing really productive, important science!

Be honest about myself and my own needs first, and communicate with honesty and respect.

Asking for specific kinds of support is usually helpful. I know my project and professional needs well so being proactive about figuring out the kind of support and feedback I need and seeking it out has worked well.

Find outside mentors in the career paths in which you are interested through different groups on campus or just reaching out to people in the Boston area. Leaning on post docs and more senior graduate students for help and guidance.