Plan Proposal Minute Form Glossary

Student Progress:

1. Assess the student's progress at Bennington. How has the student done in classes? Is the student studying broadly?

   In assessing the student's pursuit of a liberal arts education, particular issues—such as poor performance in certain kinds of classes—and more general ones—such as a reluctance to study outside of a certain area—should be addressed. Strengths and accomplishments may be noted as well.

The Plan:

1. Working Title:

   This is the student's initial description of what's driving her creative and intellectual curiosity at the start of the third term. Working titles may be idiosyncratic; they should be fluid and need not refer explicitly to disciplines (although they may do so). Recent examples include: "Myth, its Mediums and Mentalities"; "Spanish and Elementary Education"; and "International Relations and Humanitarian Law in the Context of Culture." Ideally, formulating a working title helps each student discover what is leading him toward a path or paths of study. Because the title is expected to shift over time, this is not a place for the student or Plan committee to over-analyze at this point; rather, it may be a place to return to at the close of the meeting.

2. List the main areas of study that support this Plan:

   These should be narrowly focused ("lyric poetry" rather than literature, e.g.; "plant biology" rather than science), but encompass more than any one individual course and comprise activities or subjects of study available at, or through, Bennington (including FWT and study abroad programs). The student is encouraged to interpret curricular offerings in an individual way, and to argue, if need be, for the viability of his choices.

3. What discipline group(s) will be responsible for assessing progress in the student's work?
   Who specifically will be responsible?

   The role of the disciplines is to support the Plan process by providing structures for feedback and guidance to the student, to communicate recommendations for the studies that will best support the student's advanced work, and to furnish a grounded center from which a student may explore the college as a whole.

Looking to the future:

1. Is the Plan feasible for this student at Bennington College?

   Can the student accomplish what she proposes by taking courses at Bennington, integrating FWT experiences, and study abroad programs? It is up to the student to propose and defend the plan of study; it is up to the Plan committee to decide if it is feasible.

2. How will the student use resources (e.g. faculty, FWT, study abroad) to assist in the realization of his/her Plan?

   Here the committee can identify specific resources (Field Work Term or study abroad experiences, for example) that the student needs so that her Plan can be realized.

3. Any additional comments?

The advisor or committee may choose to use this area as a way to document shortcomings, unusual elements to the Plan, or other special circumstances, requirements, or suggestions, including, for example, that the student needs to improve his writing skills.

Action on Plan:

Recommend approval

The Plan is approved without conditions. Follow-up meetings and minor essay revisions may be recommended.

Recommend conditional approval

The Plan is essentially sound, but one or more specific conditions needs to be met—the student needs to take a statistics course, for example.

Recommend deferral of action

It is not possible or advisable to assess the soundness of the Plan at this time. Transfer students in their first term at Bennington, for example, may not have sufficient coursework completed for adequate assessment. Students whose Plans are deferred twice over the course of two consecutive terms are typically placed on academic probation the following term.

Do not recommend approval

The Plan presented is not viable. This may mean that the Plan is poorly conceived and articulated; it may mean that there is no actual Plan as such; or it may mean that the Plan is simply not feasible at Bennington. Students whose Plans are not approved are typically placed on academic probation the following term.

Next plan meeting:

Additional Plan meetings are encouraged if the student has recently changed focus and needs to demonstrate accomplishment in a certain area or if a student Plan (and Plan essay) needs re-articulating for focus and clarification. It is not only a way to provide more support for students who might be struggling, but an opportunity for students to present new ideas and get additional feedback. It should not be seen as punitive. The Plan committee or the student can initiate a supplemental Plan meeting.