Dear BPK Students,

We hope you and your families are doing well after working your way through the sudden changes to your Spring courses and day to day lives.

BPK students have expressed concern that the online learning environment presents opportunities for academic dishonesty. The possibility that other students are participating in assessments without integrity is causing stress and impacting motivation for students who pursue their studies honestly. BPK students also feel that academic dishonesty decreases the quality of their educational experience.

Moving into Summer 2020, with all BPK courses online, we want to remind you of the principles, and importance, of academic integrity. As a scholarly community, the value of our academic achievements is grounded in the effort we put forward and the honesty, integrity and ethics with which we conduct ourselves.

We recognize the development of personal responsibility, ethical decision making, academic integrity, and social responsibility as a fundamental goal of university education. SFU has developed many resources to assist you in developing ethical study practices.

https://www.sfu.ca/students/academicintegrity/student-resources.html

Instructors and TA’s are working together and making use of resources to facilitate learning in the online environment. SFU provides resources to assist you in adapting your learning to an online environment.

https://www.lib.sfu.ca/about/branches-depts/slc/learning/distance
https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/students/support/SER_Student%20Guide%20to%20Online%20Learning.pdf

The BPK Student Association acknowledges that the transition to online learning is challenging, and they would like to recommend the following resources they found particularly helpful during the changes we experienced in the Spring semester.

Students should consider coordinating study groups with SFU Zoom, which allows meetings with unlimited time:

https://www.sfu.ca/itservices/technical/videoconferencing/zoom/using-zoom.html

The social and academic interactions during university education provide opportunities for community support and to build our social connections. The ability to interact socially, share concerns and develop bonds is very important for our growth, development and health. There are many resources to assist students in these stressful times when our social interactions have been changed. Please reach out when you require support.

https://www.sfu.ca/students/support/health-and-wellness/strategies-to-manage-stress.html
https://www.sfu.ca/students/health/resources/my-ssp.html

The BPK Mental Health Committee provides monthly tips for students and faculty to assist in maintaining mental wellness: http://www.sfu.ca/bpk/mentalhealthtips.html
Stress surrounding academic progress and degree completion can often be alleviated by learning more about your options and developing a clearer understanding of your path forward. The BPK academic advisor, Aiden Wickey, provides answers to frequently asked questions on the website below, and is available to answer questions by email and during phone appointments.

http://www.sfu.ca/bpk/undergrad_program/advising.html

Instructors are recommended to conduct assessments in a way that minimizes the opportunities for academic dishonesty and provides students with the confidence that the process is as fair as possible. SFU’s academic integrity website provides detailed descriptions of what is considered academically dishonest. The following quote reminds us of the responsibilities we share within this academic community.

“All members of the university are expected to uphold the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. SFU considers any act of falsification, misrepresentation or deception to be destructive because it is unfair to students who pursue their studies honestly, it compromises the worth of other’s work, and ultimately prevents students from meaningfully reaching their own scholarly potential.”

The formal process for a case of academic dishonesty results in a report to SFU administration. It is BPK practice to report all acts of academic dishonesty. The SFU academic integrity website outlines the process and disciplinary options when cases of academic dishonesty occur. The penalty assessments range from warnings to failing grades for particular exams or assignments with minor offenses, to failure due to academic dishonesty on the transcript for major or repeat offenses.

https://www.sfu.ca/students/academicintegrity/process.html

In closing, we commend you on your contributions to our academic community, and on your progress with your degree thus far. We encourage you to learn how to adapt your learning to an online environment and to reach out for support from faculty and your fellow students, as well as the academic and health resources available. Our academic community is built on your efforts to produce work that you can be proud to call your own.

“It’s your education. It’s your future.” It’s your responsibility.

Take care, we are in this together.

BPK Undergraduate Program Committee
BPK Student Association
Behavioural Neuroscience Student Society

1. Quotes are from the SFU Academic Integrity Web site. https://www.sfu.ca/students/academicintegrity.html