Appendix K: Guidelines for Group Work Activity and Grading in HSCI Courses

Guidelines for group work activity and grading in HSCI courses

Approved by the FHS Undergraduate Studies Committee, Jan. 16, 2014. Note: These are guidelines only.

Group work is commonly featured in courses. While there are merits to using such projects, assessment of the group is not always easy and straightforward. Furthermore, problems that arise with lack of cooperation, from different perceptions of effort invested, and academic dishonesty in the group can make such projects frustrating for students and instructors. The following set of guidelines and tips are suggestions to avoiding problems that commonly encountered in group work assigned in courses.

- Be intentional
  - Tell students what is your policy and put it in the syllabus
  - Give students time to work on the assignment as a group – in class or in tutorials
  - Provide a rubric
  - If they are to monitor for plagiarism, spell this out and give them some tools to do it.
  - Consider using the Turnitin tool: [http://www.sfu.ca/tlc/technology/turnitin.html](http://www.sfu.ca/tlc/technology/turnitin.html)

- Group and individual responsibility
  - Assign roles and grades to be assigned for those individual roles
  - You may consider peer review and grading, but this should be used only with modeling how such grades should be awarded. Make it clear to them what is A-level work, B-level, etc. That is, there should be a rubric that indicates different performance levels. It is also advisable to make such review anonymous.
  - Describe the grade that results from the project as a whole and how cooperation is essential to meeting this goal
  - Consider asking students to identify their contribution to the project, as co-authors do for some journals.

- Spell out penalties
  - The SFU policy on liability for academic misconduct or dishonesty in group work is largely silent. It does state that “Faculty should also impart other relevant information, such as the acceptable level of group work in the class or course.”
  - Instructors have these options for cases of academic misconduct:
    - i. give the student a warning;
    - ii. require the student to redo the work, or to do supplementary work;
    - iii. assign a low grade for the work;
    - iv. assign a grade of “F” for the work.