July 24, 2012

Dear International Students and Scholars,

UB international students have recently received scam e-mail messages so I’m writing to call your attention to this scam. It involves e-mail responses to ads in the Spectrum, Craig’s List, UB’s Off-Campus Housing Office, etc. about rooms or apartments for sublet. Since UB students have lost significant amounts of money ($500-$6,000) in such scams in the past, please beware.

Here is the scammer’s strategy:

1) Contact you to express interest in renting your room or apartment.
2) Win your trust by sharing personal information OR Intimidate you by calling repeatedly and telling you the situation is urgent OR Involve parents or business persons in the matter so you feel that it is legitimate.
3) Send you money via personal check, fake Western Union money order, etc.
4) Present a complicated solution for payment (e.g. money originating from a third person, arrangement involving a business person, etc.) Overpayment is often included in the proposed payment plan.
5) Ask you for a refund of the money before the check clears at your bank. If extra money was included in the “payment”, ask you to send the extra money to someone else.

HERE IS WHAT REALLY HAPPENS:

1) THE SCAMMER SENDS YOU A BAD CHECK OR FAKE MONEY ORDER.
2) IF YOU SEND ANYONE MONEY, YOU SEND THEM YOUR MONEY BECAUSE THERE IS NO MONEY BEHIND THE CHECK YOU RECEIVED.

AS ALWAYS, BE ALERT TO SCAMS. DELETE SUCH MESSAGES IMMEDIATELY.

Sincerely,

Ellen Dussourd

EXAMPLE OF APARTMENT RENTAL SCAM

THE COMPLICATED PAYMENT PLAN BELOW IS A CLEAR SIGN THAT THIS IS A SCAM.

Hi (UB Student),

I am very happy to know that you have, received the payment. But there was a little problem which I guess we can handle with understanding. It was yesterday after receiving your mail that I discover this… I instructed my client agent to send out the money to you but there was a mistake in the issuance of the rental deposit…. I told him to send you the exact rent payment and also told him to send some money to Terry’s travel agent in another check but he claimed he did not get the information clearly so he made all the money out to you but I guess it is a small thing we can work out. Now the deal is on and we will get through it. What will happen is that as you have gotten the check have it deposited and deduct the rent payment for 1 months. After that You will deduct extra $100 for yourself which will serve as compensation, cause I am taking you through stress for helping me out in solving this little problem my client caused.

Then you will have the balance forwarded to Terry’s travel agent who will work on her paper so she can be coming over as soon as possible.

You are to send the money to the travel agent via WESTERN UNION MONEY TRANSFER…I just
want to get everything set for her since i may not even be around at her move in date....I guess i told you am a business man and i travel a lot due to the nature of my work.

Ashley Kingfischer