

April 19, 2008

Dear International Students and Scholars,

A UB student recently received an e-mail response to her ad for someone to sublet her apartment. This is not the first time that scammers have responded to ads in the Spectrum and elsewhere. In fact, at least three UB international students have lost significant amounts of money (\$500 – \$6,000) in such scams.

Here is the scammer's strategy:

- 1) Contact you to express interest in renting your apartment.
- 2) Say a lot of things to win your trust
- 2) Present a complicated solution for payment (e.g. money originating from a third person, etc.) Overpayment is often included in the proposed payment plan.
- 3) Send you money via personal check, fake Western Union money order, etc.
- 4) 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.

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

Sincerely,  
Ellen Dussourd

#### **EXAMPLE OF APARTMENT RENTAL SCAM**

*Hi (UB Student),*

*Thanks for getting back to me, I do not have any questions for now, I have to take up the place. I am ready to pay \$800 as deposit. I will like to pay this and secure the apartment. I will let you know the exact move in date when the deposit must have gotten to you and all arrangements concluded. I really need the place secured because i wouldn't want to get stranded on my arrival and that is the basis of the payment before my arrival, the former room i was to live in was given out because i did not pay deposit to secure the room. Please you have to make the documents for the lease ready for signing on my arrival.*

***THE COMPLICATED PAYMENT PLAN BELOW IS A CLEAR SIGN THAT THIS IS A SCAM.***  
*As regards payment my mom has a client in the US that owes her some money, he has made out money order for the amount he owes my mom before he travelled to Asia for a business trip, but it is more than your actual deposit i will pay to you, he will have to send the Money Order to you, You will send the balance back to me when you have deducted your deposit, this will take care of my flight ticket and other necessary arrangements before coming. Well i need the name as you want it to appear on the Money Order, the address to send the Money Order and your phone number. Money order sent within US and CANADA will clear instantly. Money order does not clear in England and even if it does it takes much more longer time. Please kindly get back to me ASAP. Hope to hear from you soon.*

Regards  
Vivian