

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY



PUBLIC SAFETY BULLETIN – DECEMBER 4, 2008

ALERT:

Critical / Major Incident

ADVISORY:

Important Incident

BULLETIN:

General Information

Public Safety would like to inform the University of St. Thomas community of a scam targeting college students.

The Attorney General of Iowa recently released a warning regarding a new check scam targeting college students. Letters from an organization called "Grant Prospect, Inc." have been sent to college students telling them they have been approved for a \$50,000 grant to pay college related expenses. The letter contains a check for over \$4,000. The student is advised to cash the check to send money back to the organization to pay state and federal processing fees. The check is counterfeit. No UST students have reported being a victim of this particular scam.

More information about this and other scams can be found at the following links:

http://www.state.ia.us/government/ag/latest_news/releases/nov_2008/Grant_Scam.html

http://www.ag.state.mn.us/Consumer/Fraud/fraud_ScholarAid.asp

<http://www.fbi.gov/cyberinvest/escams.htm>

Fraud prevention tips:

- Do not respond to suspicious e-mails or mailings. Most often it is best to just delete or throw them away.
- Fake payment scams by their nature sound very believable. Scammers actively search for victims online.
- Counterfeit checks, money orders, and currency look very real, and can even fool bank staff.
- Under federal law, banks must make deposited funds available quickly. Just because you withdraw the money, doesn't mean the check is good. It can often take weeks to discovery forgeries.
- Financial institutions that lose money as a result of cashing a fraudulent check expect to recoup their loss, often at the expense of the victim. You are responsible for the transactions you make.
- There is **no** legitimate reason for someone who is giving you payment to ask you to send money back. Insist on getting paid the exact amount.
- Trust your instincts. If a business proposition seems suspicious, then don't engage in the transaction.

Report crime confidentially or anonymously:

by e-mailing PSTIPS@stthomas.edu,

or calling 96(2-TIPS).

Public Safety urges you to be pro-active and alert. You can help prevent crime!

If you have information regarding crimes on campus you are urged to contact
Public Safety at (651) 962-5100 and the police (651) 291-1111

Removal Date: 12/18/2008