



November 19, 2015

This bulletin alerts students of an on-going financial scam targeting college students.

Background:

In September 2015, university students located in San Francisco and New Jersey received emails from a person moving to the area and asking if the students were interested in babysitting. If they agreed, a check from Belt Railway was sent to them as an advance payment for services but it came with a request to return a portion of the money to the sendee. These incidents stopped near the end of September.

In mid-October, multiple students from at least two Chicago universities received emails referencing resumes they had posted online and offering conditional employment. Students who responded to these emails were sent checks via FedEx delivery with instructions on how to cash them and instruction to return a portion of the money. In most cases, the students did not attempt to cash the checks and did not send any money to the requestor, but instead notified campus security. In some other cases, it is known that the students did attempt to cash the checks, though unsuccessfully. It is not known if those students forwarded any of their own funds to the requestor. The potential exists that students could be persuaded to send the funds prior to attempting to cash the check. If this occurs, the student would be permanently defrauded of these funds.

Precaution:

Columbia College Chicago Office of Safety and Security would like to increase awareness of this scam which is occurring locally and directed against college and university students.

- Students need to recognize the indicators of this financial scam.
- Students should be cautious of emails offering employment conditional on them cashing checks and returning money to the requestor.
- If students receive emails such as described above, they should isolate the email and notify the campus security office immediately.

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