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Subject: [APB-L] UC San Diego PD Community Alert Bulletin
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UC SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

December 11, 2019

ALL ACADEMICS, STAFF AND STUDENTS AT UC SAN DIEGO

SUBJECT: Community Alert Bulletin – Theft by False Pretenses (Phone Scams) - Update

The UC San Diego Police Department would like to warn all community members of telephone and financial scams involving all community members but specifically targeting international students. In addition to the scams that we have previously warned about, criminals are developing new and sophisticated techniques to defraud people out of money.

The following is information about scams we are seeing and/or have seen in the recent past:

Extortion Scams:

Phone scams that threaten individuals with an arrest and deportation, if they fail to meet the scammer's demands. This may include threats of arrests of international students from police in their country of origin or the American government. The phone call usually starts with a person identifying themselves as an American or foreign government official claiming to have an open case involving the victim in criminal activity or claiming that the victim's social security number has been used for illegal activity. The caller then threatens the victim with an arrest and imprisonment, deportation, or future visa denial. To prevent arrest, the scammer asks the victim to purchase hundreds or thousands of dollars in gift cards, Bitcoin or other cryptocurrency, or bank wire transfer funds to the scammer.

Scammers have the technological ability to 'spoof' legitimate government phone numbers. They may even ask you to 'Google' the phone number shown on your caller ID to confirm they are from a government agency. Search engines may even show that the number the scammers are calling from is the same number as a true government agency. However, the incoming phone number is often 'spoofed' and not the true phone number.

General safety tips with regards to telephone scams:

- The United States government and law enforcement will NEVER ask for any form of payment, including gift cards or Bitcoin and cryptocurrency, to avoid an arrest.
- Do not assume that the phone number shown on your telephone screen during an incoming phone call is the true phone number that is calling. Technology allows scammers to 'spoof' or change the phone number that appears on your phone screen for an incoming call. If there is any doubt, hang up, look up the phone number for the agency you are trying to call and call them back yourself.
- If you are an international student, confirm any communications with your government by

calling your local consulate.

- Always be suspicious of phone calls from unknown individuals or phone numbers that you do not recognize.
- Do not conduct business over the phone with callers you do not know.
- Never share personal or financial information over the phone with someone you do not know, e.g., social security number, debit/credit/pre-paid card numbers, etc.
- If anyone contacts you and asks you to pay or send them money using Bitcoin, wire transfer, or pre-paid cards of any sort, this is probably a scam.
- If anyone calls asking for payment due to your involvement in a criminal case, hang up the phone and call your local police department.
- If you cannot verify the caller's identity, feel unsafe, or suspect criminal activity, call the UC San Diego Police Department: Non-emergency help line, (858) 534-4357.