

Examination switch results in criminal charges

(SPS) Two California men were sentenced to probation after pleading no contest to criminal charges arising from a cheating scheme in which one student paid a National Merit scholar \$400 to take an economics examination for him.

Tony H. Lee, 20, a student at the California State University, Northridge, and Parousia Liu, 20, a National Merit scholar enrolled at the University of California at Los Angeles, were charged Nov. 19 with falsifying a driver's license. They faced maximum penalties of a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

On Nov. 24, both men pleaded no contest to the charges. Liu was fined \$445, while Lee was fined \$364. Each was sentenced to two years' probation.

Keith Evans, economics de-

partment chairman at Cal State Northridge, said he was disappointed with the sentences, which he didn't believe were strict enough to deter would-be cheaters.

College officials said Lee also could be expelled from the college. Lee failed the same class last spring under a different professor.

Lee is accused of hiring Liu for \$400 to take his exams for him in Professor Ed McDevitt's Principles of Microeconomics class.

"He knew I was a good economics student," said Liu, who said he agreed to take the test because he needed the money. "I work, but I don't get paid well enough."

Relying on notes passed to him from Lee, Liu took the first

exam Sept. 20 and earned an 82 (sharply above the 60 McDevitt believed an 80 would allow) alerting him to a possible impostor in his class.

"I was pretty upset because I really abhor cheating," McDevitt said. "To me, it's the equivalent of stealing."

With more than 50 students in his class, McDevitt did not try to single out the student in question. Instead, he asked students to bring identification cards to the next exam on Nov. 5.

That day, Liu allegedly showed up as Lee, but was unable to provide any identification. McDevitt let Liu take the exam, but made him agree to bring identification to receive his test grade on Nov. 11.

Between the exam and the meeting with McDevitt, campus

police said Liu paid \$275 for a phony driver's license with a picture borrowed from the Northridge student.

On Nov. 11, Liu went to the meeting with McDevitt, only to find campus police waiting for him. When confronted about the phony ID, the UCLA student confessed his part in the scheme and led officers to Lee, who also confessed.

The students said they regretted their actions.

"This is my first and last time," Lee said. "It's like an at-the-moment thing, you know what I mean? Even if you accomplish it, you're like, 'Why'd I have to do this?'"

Lee, whose major is undecided, said he failed the class last semester because his friends encouraged him to ditch the class

and party with them.

Cal State officials said they are investigating the case for disciplinary action against Lee, which could range from a formal reprimand to expulsion.

Michael Wilding, UCLA's assistant dean of students, said Liu is unlikely to face any academic discipline from UCLA since the university has no jurisdiction over what students do off campus.

That thought does not soothe some professors.

"I'm worried that this notion of somebody taking exams for somebody else is much more common than we think," Evans said. With more and more students being packed into classrooms, Evans pointed out, "I'm afraid it's going to be much harder to detect."

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