UCI Police Department has received several reports of students who have received unsolicited friend requests through social media websites, such as Facebook and Skype. After accepting the requests and communicating with the individuals, unknown suspect(s) threaten the students and attempt to extort money. Also, students have reported receiving text messages from unknown suspect(s) on their cell phones indicating that they know personal information about the student. General threats regarding the student’s safety have also been sent. The UCI Police Department is actively investigating and seeking to identify the suspect(s).

This type of scam is becoming increasingly common, where individuals threaten to send compromising pictures or video to a victim’s friends and family or post the information online to Facebook, Skype and YouTube. Additionally, malware can be installed on your computer and used to operate built-in web cameras, recording images without your knowledge or consent.

Be aware that anything you do on the Internet, including video and voice calls, can be recorded. Never accept a friend request from someone you do not know. Be cautious about people you meet online. If you have been threatened by an individual, block their emails and stop all contact. Save all details, emails, comment threads or any other evidence you may have by taking screenshots or a photo. If you think information has been posted online, you may contact the host site to ask them to remove the posts. Paying scammers or extortionists is never encouraged.

Immediately report all suspicious contacts, persons or illegal activity to the UCI Police Department at (949) 824-5223.

Jorge Cisneros
Chief
UCI Police Department