

Ex-dean accused of making NYC students do chores - The Associated Press

Written by Administrator
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By TOM HAYS (AP) – 47 minutes ago

NEW YORK — One St. John's University student was ordered to make meals at a veteran administrator's home. Another withdrew cash that was delivered to the same official at a casino. A third had to answer personal e-mails — or else be kicked out of

school.

The allegations in a federal complaint unsealed Thursday were the latest in a widening scandal involving Cecilia Chang, the former dean of the Institute of Asian Studies and vice president for international relations.

A judge jailed Chang on Thursday on forced labor charges, alleging she threatened to withdraw scholarships from students unless they did her personal chores. A bail hearing was set for Friday in federal court in Brooklyn.

There was no immediate response to a message left for her defense attorney.

In a statement, St. John's called the latest accusations "shocking and in complete violation of what this university stands for."

Before losing her job in June after 30 years at the school, Chang traveled worldwide as one of its top fundraisers. She was arrested on Sept. 15 on state charges she embezzled about \$1 million, including a \$250,000 donation from a Saudi prince's foundation.

The federal case is based in part on FBI interviews with unnamed students, most from overseas, who were awarded scholarships of \$5,000 or more per semester by Chang.

Officially, the terms required the students to work part-time for the Asian studies program. Instead, the complaint says, they became Chang's personal assistants.

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One student described having to report to Chang's home in Queens each day to drive "Chang to the hair salon, to restaurants and to the airport," the complaint says. It adds the student also "was responsible for taking out garbage and shoveling snow."

It says other students shopped for food, cooked and washed cloths. Another student cashed her checks so that her drivers could take cash to Foxwoods, a casino in Connecticut.

Chang "would often tell (one student) she was the 'boss,'" the complaint said. She allegedly warned the same student to keep quiet this year when the FBI began investigating.

After Chang was fired, one of the victims sent an e-mail to a St. John's official expressing concerns about losing a scholarship. Chang had three student housekeepers who each worked 122 days a year, the e-mail said.

The school said Thursday that the students would continue to receive financial aid.

Chang faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted on the federal charges.

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