Recently, male students at Carnegie Mellon and other local universities within the greater Pittsburgh area have been lured into online blackmail incidents involving demands for payment in order to prevent the release of sensitive videos/photographs.

The reported incidents follow a pattern where male students are initially contacted via social media such as Facebook. After a brief conversation, the victims are asked to continue the conversations via Skype. The victims are encouraged to remove their clothes and/or perform sexual acts in view of the camera. Afterward, an unknown person contacts the victim, claiming to have recorded the event, and demanding money to prevent the release of the recording. In some cases, the victims were told to purchase a money order to be sent to an unknown address. Some of the victims were told the video would be posted on social media and/or sent to friends and family if payment was not made.

We are urging you to be careful about your online activities and to be skeptical of requests to perform acts on camera. Remember, once photos or videos are made available to others via the internet, it may difficult to prevent disclosure and dissemination of the content.

Anyone experiencing this type of incident or with information related to them is asked to contact CMU Police at 412-268-2323 and/or the Office of Title IX Initiatives at 412-268-7125. Reports will be handled discreetly.

Sincerely,

Tom Ogden
Chief of University Police