

Terrapin threatens professor over grade

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Tribune Media Services

COLLEGE PARK, Md. - Police have arrested a former student of the University of Maryland at College Park on assault and weapons charges after a math professor reported that the student threatened him with a gun and insisted that he get an "A" in the class.

Investigators aren't releasing the professor's name, but they said his sharp eye for detail was instrumental in helping police with their investigation of his claims.

Campus police charged 22-year-old Stephen Clancy Hill, an economics major, with first-degree assault, carrying a concealed deadly weapon, carrying that weapon on campus and using a handgun to commit a felony.

If convicted on all four charges, he could spend up to 51 years in prison. Hill remained in jail on Tuesday with no bond.

According to a police report, Hill requested a meeting with the professor on October 12. The two agreed to meet around noon. When Hill arrived he asked the professor's officemate to leave so he could have a private discussion with the professor.

The professor told police that Hill lifted his jacket to reveal a handgun tucked in a shoulder holster as he talked about needing an "A" in the math course and his expectations that the professor would give him one.

"Mr. Hill further told the vic-

tim that he was going to give him an 'A' or Mr. Hill would make the victim disappear, leaving no evidence," a police report stated.

The professor told police that Hill warned him not to say anything about their conversation and then left the office.

After the professor reported his encounter with Hill, police discovered that Hill had recently purchased a gun closely matching the description the professor had provided.

Investigators got search warrants for Hill's off-campus home and car and kept both under surveillance.

On October 14 soon after Hill drove away from his house, police pulled him over. Officers arrested Hill and found a loaded 9-milimeter semiautomatic handgun and three loaded ammunition clips on the seat next to him, police said.

After searching Hill's house, police also reported finding a shoulder holster very similar to the one the professor said he had seen Hill wearing.

Police said they would send the case to the state's attorney's office for review.

Meanwhile, Hill was dropped from the school's enrollment on Monday.

School spokesman George Cathcart said federal privacy laws prevented him or any other university official from discussing the circumstances surrounding Hill's departure.

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but we also have the obligation to communicate it responsibly," said Braye.

Recently questions about the right to intellectual property have arisen. Examples of this include

who has the right to research done on the campus or using the college's facilities. Usually an understanding is reached between the faculty member and the college.

Basically the academic state-

ment is being revised to ensure everyone has the right to speak their mind as long as they do it responsibly.

Academic Update

Mary Wise
Asst. Dean for Academic
Affairs

When students at last year's Academic Summit said they wanted classes to be more challenging, they couldn't have imagined the firestorm they would ignite. Since that April morning, faculty, students, administrators and staff, have been echoing the battle cry of "Challenge," much as the calvary of old would have shouted "Charge!" while cantering into combat. As I've listened to discussions of what "challenge" means, I am reminded of a battle between students and faculty where each tries to shift the responsibility for creating challenge to the other, like tossing off a red-hot cannon ball.

Students responding to "what is challenge?" see it as a faculty responsibility. They want faculty to present material that is just above their current knowledge level so that they have to stretch. Students may complain about the effort involved in completing challenging material, but they are proud when they've achieved success. Challenge is not

more work, but somehow smarter work, assignments that target their individual needs. Faculty should provide that for them. One of my students wrote, "The teacher has the power to make the class as challenging as he/she wants to."

Some faculty I've heard, on the other hand, observe that while they can create an ocean of challenge and bring the proverbial student to its edge, they cannot make him or her drink. Challenge, they report, is largely student generated, fueled by preparation for classes, an engaged and inquiring mind, and a desire for understanding that provides internal motivation. How can a single faculty member know the "challenge

point" for every student in his or her classes?

I think both groups are right. When I reflect on what "challenge" means, I am reminded of what happens when one prepares a cake. Ingredients such as flour, sugar, eggs and butter, begin as separate objects. Alone, like the parts of challenge possessed by students and by teachers, they hold only the potential for baking. But mix them together, and they form something entirely new, something that no longer looks at all like the original parts of the mixture. I like to think of teaching as a kind of baking. Come, bring your intellectual ingredients to join mine. Together we can create a challenging mixture, a real piece of cake.

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