



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FORMER COLLEGE EMPLOYEE PLEADS GUILTY TO STEALING STUDENT LOAN CHECKS

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a former Longview Community College employee pleaded guilty today to stealing 14 student loan checks with a total loss of approximately \$30,000.

Cynda L. Long, 52, of Lee's Summit, Mo, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Ortrie D. Smith this morning to defrauding the U.S. Department of Education and stealing from Federal Guaranteed Student Loan Program funds on repeated occasions from August 1999 to April 2000.

By pleading guilty, **Long** admitted that she received a total of 14 student loan checks from various banks, which were deposited into her personal checking account.

The checks represented six different individuals and loan applicants. In most cases, the individuals whose names appeared on the checks, were not attending Longview Community College or were ineligible to receive federal student loans at the time the checks were deposited into **Long's** account. **Long** admitted that she stole the identity of her children and other individuals to submit fraudulent student loan applications. In addition, Long admitted that she obtained the name and social security number of at least one of the victims from the school's computer data base.

Long spent the money and blamed her conduct on a gambling addiction. She worked as a student financial aid assistant at Longview Community College from 1999 to 2000 and worked three years previously in the college's business office.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christina Y. Tabor. The case was investigated by United States Department of Education's Office of the Inspector General.

Earlier, on March 22, 2001, **Long** pleaded guilty to forgery in the Circuit Court of Jackson County, admitting she stole two additional student loan checks totaling \$2,141 from Longview Community College.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow