

# Ex-director of NTU subsidiary charged with cheating

**Shaffiq Alkhatib**

The former director of an innovation and enterprise company under Nanyang Technological University (NTU) was yesterday accused of cheating organisations, including his then-employer, of \$225,000.

Cheng Choong Hung, 55, who was from NTUitive, was charged with 22 counts of cheating. He also faces 96 counts of dealing with the benefits of his alleged criminal activities and two charges of abetment to knowingly give false quotations with the intent to deceive NTUitive.

An alleged accomplice, Louise Lai

Pei Hsien, 42, former director of IT firm I-KnowHow, was also charged yesterday with 15 counts of cheating involving \$191,000.

In 10 charges allegedly involving Cheng, Lai is said to have submitted invoices from I-KnowHow to NTU, NTUitive and TechBiz Xccelerator – a wholly-owned subsidiary of NTUitive – for works not done by her then-employer. As a result, the organisations were duped into paying the IT firm \$117,000 from August 2014 to February 2015.

In another three charges, Lai and Cheng allegedly worked together to cheat NTUitive by submitting invoices from I-KnowHow to Ms Lu Ji-

awen, who was then working for TechBiz Xccelerator.

A statement from the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) said these invoices were for developmental works supposedly outsourced by Ms Lu to I-KnowHow. NTUitive was then allegedly induced to disburse \$44,000 to Ms Lu in 2015.

Without Cheng, Lai allegedly conspired with her husband Wong Chee Leong to cheat NTU of another \$30,000 in 2016.

According to court papers, Cheng allegedly conspired with Ms Lu and director of design and technology studio Voidworks Fung Kwok Pan



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to commit cheating offences involving \$64,000 in 2015 and 2016.

Cheng is also accused of conspiring with Mr Amunumulle Jayasinghe Mudiyanse Udeepa Gayantha Jayasinghe, then a technical manager at NTU, to give false quotations from Voidworks to a financial controller at NTUitive in

2015. This was allegedly done to deceive and mislead NTUitive.

In addition, Cheng is accused of concealing more than \$200,000 of his alleged ill-gotten gains in a bank account belonging to a Mr Xu Meng, whose identity was not revealed in court documents. In its statement, CPIB said it has since seized about \$281,000 from Cheng.

Responding to queries from The Straits Times, NTU said Cheng was employed at the university between June 2013 and June 2016.

An NTU spokesman said: “NTU reported the matter to the CPIB in August 2016 as soon as it found out about the alleged wrongdoing. The university is unable to comment as the matter is undergoing court proceedings.”

Cheng is out on bail of \$50,000 while Lai’s bail was set at \$20,000. The two Singaporeans will be back in court on Jan 3.

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