

Doctor continues work after incidents

The Associated Press

TAMPA — A resident psychiatrist who broke into a female co-worker's apartment was closely monitored by University of South Florida officials, who decided he should be allowed to continue his work after the incident.

Dr. Harbir Sengh Sekhon went to trial last month, was fined and is now on probation that includes community service.

USF Psychiatry Department chairman Dr. Anthony Reading said he heard allegations in July concerning Sekhon and a break-in. He interviewed Sekhon, placed him on university probation, which since has been lifted, and monitored him, the Tampa Tribune reported Thursday.

But Reading was unaware until Wednesday that the State Attorney's Office had charged Sekhon with twice breaking into the 19-year-old woman's home, one count of criminal mischief and one count of telephone harassment, for which Sekhon is now on six months' legal probation.

Sekhon also is completing 50 hours of community service and has paid a fine of \$85 plus court costs.

Reading said Friday in a phone interview that Sekhon should have told the university about the legal disposition of the case. But he said the university's handling of Sekhon's case probably would not have changed. He said Sekhon made a mistake, but the important question was whether it would affect his work.

Sekhon, 28, pleaded no contest to the four misdemeanor charges. Although Hillsborough County Judge Sam Pendino withheld a formal finding of guilt, violation of the probation orders could result in adjudication of the charges.

Upon hearing the allegations last summer, Reading said, he initiated an investigation of the matter.

He and other USF officials did not speak with the woman whose apartment was broken into, obtain legal records concerning the incidents or speak with police investigating the matter, he said. Reading had not seen police and court records concerning the case, he said. USF officials now are trying to obtain those records.

Sekhon, who was working at the center, went out with the woman twice last June. After the second date, the woman told Sekhon she wanted no further contact with him, police records show.

But one week before his July 1 appointment as a USF psychiatric resident, Sekhon broke into the woman's apartment, records show. She was not home.

Two nights later, the woman's apartment was entered a second time. Neighbors reported hearing loud banging sounds coming from the apartment the night of the second incident.

According to records, they told police they saw Sekhon leave the apartment. A police investigation after that break-in revealed broken locks on three doors, a broken door frame and a missing towel.

On June 28, Sekhon admitted to both break-ins during a taped telephone conversation, Temple Terrace police Detective Richard Urban said, but a day later denied he'd done anything wrong.

During the days surrounding the two incidents, Sekhon made a series of telephone calls to the woman and others who knew her, she and others say. He also went to her mother's workplace and gave her a check for \$500 to cover damages to her daughter's apartment, records show.

The State Attorney's Office did not pursue felony burglary charges because of Sekhon's prior social relationship with the woman, Hanes said.