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Ex-surgery head of HKU charged with misconduct and false accounting

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A former Head of Department of Surgery of The University of Hong Kong (HKU) has been today (Tuesday) charged by the ICAC with misconduct for his alleged misuse of HKU funds to hire a domestic helper and cover-up of a subordinate's embezzlement, and with false accounting in relation to overseas travelling expenses.

John Wong, 70, faces four charges - two of misconduct in public office, and two of false accounting. He will appear at Eastern Magistracy at 9:30 am this Thursday (June 30) for mention, pending transfer to the District Court.

At the time of the alleged offences, the defendant was the Head of Department of Surgery of the Faculty of Medicine of HKU. The department established the Skills Development Centre (SDC) in 1995 to provide medical training to all surgical specialties, medical students, interns, nurses and doctors.

In 2005, the defendant set up Unisurgical Limited (Unisurgical), of which he was the sole shareholder cum director.

One of the misconduct charges alleges that between January 29, 2002 and January 30, 2007, the defendant directed from the bank account of the SDC a total of over \$730,000 to be used as payments for hiring a domestic helper cum driver.

Another misconduct charge alleges that between late 2006 and December 23, 2008, the defendant failed to report to HKU that his subordinate had stolen money and/or properties totalling over \$2.6 million from the bank account of the SDC; lent money to her to pay back the bank account to cover up the theft offences; and allowed her to resign from HKU without being investigated and/or disciplined, and to receive from HKU the full payments of the Staff Provident Fund totalling over \$690,000.

The remaining two charges allege that on November 20, 2006 and November 14, 2007, the defendant falsified respective entries in the Directors' Report and Accounts of Unisurgical for the year ended March 31, 2006 and March 31, 2007, purporting to show that over \$690,000 and over \$74,000 had been incurred as overseas travelling expenses respectively.

The case arose from a corruption complaint. Subsequent ICAC enquiries revealed the above alleged offences.

HKU had rendered full assistance to the ICAC in its investigation.

The defendant has been released on ICAC bail, pending his court appearance on Thursday.

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