

# Visited on 05/30/2019

- [Advertise With Us](#)
- [Jobs at WLF1](#)
- [Digital Marketing](#)
- [Our Apps](#)

🚫 SEVERE WX : Flood Warning  
[View Alerts](#)




## Purdue and former professor being sued for neglecting extensive sexual abuse case



Purdue University and a former English professor are facing a federal lawsuit regarding the sexual abuse.

Posted: Sep 21, 2018 7:43 PM

Updated: Sep 21, 2018 7:51 PM

Posted By: Anna Darling 

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. (WLF1) - A federal lawsuit has been filed against Purdue accusing the university of not properly responding to an extensive sexual assault case between a former English professor and one of his female students.

The former professor's name is Lance Duerfahrd. He was an English professor who became the Director of Film and Video Studies program.

He received tenure in 2012. That's the same year the lawsuit claims the university first discovered he was sexually assaulting students. It also claimed he had other inappropriate relationships with subordinates in the English Department and the College of Liberal Arts.

Something that is in direct violation of [Purdue's policy on amorous relationships](#).

# Visited on 05/30/2019

It claimed a student brought her experience to her academic advisor during the spring semester of 2012. The advisor then brought the information to the English Department head at the time. Duerfahrd received tenure that fall semester.

Another incident dated back to October of 2011 claimed Duerfahrd took a group of students out to a bar for drinks. It reported he then pushed a female graduate student up against a wall and sexually assaulted her.

"It's kind of scary," said Kat Kirby, a junior at Purdue. "I honestly never would have thought that it would happen here. I've heard it happen everywhere else but I can't fathom that."

But the Plaintiff dated all of her personal encounters with Duerfahrd to the fall semester of 2016, when she enrolled in one of his film classes.

It started with demanding she attend office hours where reports say he talked little of academics and much of personal matters.

The lawsuit said he began to question her commitment to her classes as he began to pressure her to meet outside of the classroom.

The Plaintiff said Duerfahrd began picking her up from her personal residence to take her to isolated places. She said she was worried that her failure to submit to her professor's demands would cause her grades to suffer.

Something students said is a clear abuse of power.

"They had a man in authority over them trying to take advantage of them because he had power of them, which is really disconcerting," said Purdue junior Neely Plaspohl.

The lawsuit said their interactions came to an end after he convinced her to come to his house where he sexually assaulted her multiple times.

The report said the Plaintiff entered the fall semester of 2016 with a 3.78 grade point average. An average the lawsuit said went down during this semester, and that the Plaintiff's mental and physical health deteriorated.

"I would have been so scared I would have been terrified," said Kirby. "I would have not known what to do and I would have been so scared to tell anybody."

However the school had a different account of what happened. The school said it had no knowledge of the claim until 2017.

Tim Doty, Director of Public Information and Issues Management for Purdue, sent the following statement:

"Upon receiving notice of the allegations, the university acted swiftly and decisively. In fact, it would be difficult to find a more clear example of Purdue's intolerance of this type of misconduct.

Immediately upon learning of the complaint against Mr. Duerfahrd, Purdue placed him on leave, ordered him to have no contact with students, and launched an investigation. Upon conclusion of the investigation, which substantiated the claim, Mr. Duerfahrd resigned under threat of termination. The entire matter was resolved in a matter of months.

Purdue takes very seriously its responsibility to provide a safe education environment for its students. The university does not and will not tolerate such misconduct by any member of its community, including faculty, regardless of their rank or tenure. This case proves it."

# Visited on 05/30/2019

Doty confirmed that Duerfahrd resigned in August of 2017.

Students think something should have been done sooner.

"I know things like that take a long time to process but it doesn't change the fact that it should have been acted upon earlier," said Plaspohl.

The lawsuit is accusing the university for violation of Title IX and negligent retention and supervision.

It is accusing Duerfahrd of sexual assault, sexual battery, and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

Students now just want to know that they are protected by their institution.

"We're here to learn," said Plaspohl. "We're not here to date our professors, we're not here to be sexually harassed by our professors."

The lawsuit said the Plaintiff transferred from Purdue during the summer of 2017 and is still trying to complete her undergraduate degree.

## Related Content

- [Purdue and former professor being sued for neglecting extensive sexual abuse case](#)
- [Purdue professor sets world record](#)
- [Purdue announces contract extension for Jeff Brohm](#)
- [Purdue professor arrested for alleged public intoxication](#)
- [Purdue professor and his wife indicted](#)
- [Some Purdue professors experience wave of harassment](#)
- [Purdue professor makes debut on Jeopardy!](#)
- [Purdue professor discusses black hole image](#)
- [Woman sentenced in Vigo County neglect case](#)
- [Purdue Senate considers resolution supporting victims of sexual abuse](#)

*Scroll for more content...*



## Article Comments