

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. (WTHR) — Two women have now filed a federal lawsuit against Purdue University.

In it, the women claim they were retaliated against after making sexual assault claims.

According to the suit, both women were expelled after a university investigation decided the women fabricated or made the report maliciously.

The women are seeking: lost tuition and removal of the discipline from their records, together with an award of compensatory damages, punitive damages, court costs and expenses, including attorney's fees.

"Mary Doe's" claim

On October 10, 2017 Mary Doe said a male student physically assaulted her in her dorm room.

The suit alleges that Purdue University was aware the male student had threatened the life of a different female student and had excluded him from the campus.

Mary Doe reported the alleged assault to Purdue University Police Department who then reported it to the university, which launched an investigation.

Mary Doe spoke with the university's investigator at the beginning of the investigation.

Purdue University allows a student to not participate in the investigation and when she later decided not to, the suit claims they used that to question her credibility.

It says she then became the target of the investigation, which decided she fabricated the story and she was expelled.

After an appeal, she was given a two-year suspension.

"Nancy Roe's" claim

On April 17, 2017 Nancy Roe alleges a man sexually assaulted her in her dorm room.

The 19-year-old admits becoming intoxicated at a fraternity party.

A man at that party walked her back to her dorm room.

The suit alleges she was then sexually assaulted and choked.

The claim also says the student made an audio recording of the assault.

When Roe noticed all the bruising on her neck, she got medical attention and reported the

alleged assault to the university.

The suit claims the university's investigation found Roe had made the claim maliciously and expelled her. She appealed and was given a two-year suspension.

The male student was found to have made an audio recording of the incident and made him write a ten (10) page paper as punishment.

Statement from the victims' attorneys

Jeffrey Macey, the attorney representing the women issued this statement to Eyewitness News:

"Being in federal court is the last thing my clients ever wanted. Both of them simply wanted to continue their academic careers at Purdue University. We are only in court as a last resort. In addition to the harm they suffered, my clients are concerned that Purdue's actions in their cases represent a shift in the way schools are handling Title IX complaints and that this shift is going to harm other victims. Both look forward to their day in court and a change in Purdue's policies going forward."

Statement from Purdue University

Purdue University issued a response to Eyewitness News saying it was aware a lawsuit had been filed, but had not yet been served with it.

The statement goes on to say:

"To the extent the case challenges the university's handling of complaints under our anti-harassment policy and procedures, we stand by our commitment to provide a safe and secure environment for all members of our community. These are often difficult matters to investigate and decide, but we are confident in our processes and believe they afford all students with broad and appropriate protections, whether they are raising allegations of sexual misconduct or responding to them. Fair application of our policy necessarily entails ensuring all parties participate in the process in good faith by providing truthful information to assist the university in making its determinations."