

Survivors share their stories

“It’s hard to anticipate what’s going to happen and who’s going to hurt someone. Some guys can be really nice and still assault you.” - Stephanie Speers

1. What happened?

My freshman year, I was assaulted by a friend of mine in our dorm. We lived in Seminary. It was in January of 2013. I didn’t know what to do because I mean, I wasn’t raped or anything. I didn’t think that going to administration would fix anything. I just thought it was a one-time thing. We talked a couple of days later, he apologized, and made me feel sorry for him. He would “run into me” when I was eating lunch or right after my classes. I was just trying to ignore it.

I ended up pledging a sorority, and he ended up pledging a fraternity. Our Greek groups were close, so I had to see him a lot. We had to go to meetings for our study abroad trip, too. I ended up dropping out spring term because I just couldn’t really take it anymore. My anxiety and depression are really bad.

But I ended up coming back

fall term and going on East Asia term, which I was really happy about. But he was in all of my classes. Some of his older brothers from his fraternity also went on the trip, and when we were in China. It was kind of sketchy when women went off by themselves. In field trips with the whole group – a little under 80 people – the guys would try to stick together or some of the older brothers in his frat would pair the girls off with a guy. I kept getting put with him. That was not great.

One of the classes offered was a political science class offered by my advisor. I’m a major, and I loved that class. But he was in it, too. He was so inspired by that class that he decided to add political science as a major. I know he didn’t do it on purpose, because why would you add a major to make someone feel uncomfortable? But it was still a lot for me.

For most of my junior year, I tried to avoid taking political science classes when I could because I didn’t want to be in a class with him. But that was my major. The experience with him being in some of my classes and his older fraternity brothers gave me PTSD and made it really hard for me to focus in political science. It was really hard to force myself to study and be passionate about something I really used to love.

2. Some people are very vocal in saying that Greek life has a part in this. Do you think that Greek life is part of the problem?

Yes and no. I’m a Sigma Kappa Tau. After there had been repeated assaults of girls in our sorority, we made sure there would be two sober sisters at all times and that at least one would have a car. If anyone goes alone with anyone else, we have to text in the group chat. It’s hard to



Photo courtesy of Stephanie Speers

Alumnus Stephanie Speers ('12) talks about being sexually assaulted her freshman year by someone who would later join her major and a fraternity close to her sorority.

anticipate what’s going to happen and who’s going to hurt someone.

Some guys can be really nice and still assault you.

“I had to sit in the Dean’s office with him sitting right there after he had done that to me and look at him.” - Christiana Headley



Photo courtesy by Christiana Headley

Alumnus Christiana Headley talks about being sexually assaulted while she was Junior here by somebody who was in band with her.

1. What happened?

I would’ve been a junior here,

I think. I was a music major and I often practiced in Bergendoff.

There was someone I knew from band. He came into the practice room and was very casual. [We were] just kinda talking, and then progressively he started kissing me and touching me – things that I didn’t want him to do. He ended up driving me back to my dorm - I lived in Westerlin - and kissing me again. I was uncomfortable with the whole thing. I didn’t want him to do any of that because of my past experiences. I don’t even know what I did; I just kinda froze. I didn’t reciprocate, but I didn’t want him to do any of that. I may have told him ‘no.’ I don’t even remember at this point.

I did report it. I don’t remember if a formal report was filed; I know I reported it to the school. I didn’t report it to the police. Then I was called in and he was called into the Dean’s office, and

he was expected to apologize to me and that was basically it. So, this would’ve been 1994-95. I did report it to a faculty member who said he would have a talk with this individual because they have heard other things about him. I never heard anything else about it. That was kind of it.

2. How did the school address it?

They rearranged the band so I wouldn’t have to look at him because we were just about to go on band tour. And then that was pretty much the end of it. It’s ridiculous now when I think about it. And knowing what I know now, I regret that I didn’t pursue it further, but at that point in my life I didn’t really know what else to do and I felt pretty helpless.

3. What if it was pursued further?

It’s hard to say. I think he was

a year older than me, he was very well known... It was kinda like... ‘we’ll tell him this is inappropriate, but we don’t want to ruin his career’ sort of thing. That was the overall sense I got. ‘He has a great future as a band director’ Even now, I don’t know how I would’ve pursued it further. You go to someone in an authority position and you kind of expect everyone to take some sort of action. I wasn’t the first person he had done that to and there were really no repercussions; he continued on as if everything were fine. It was all within a few days or a week. And I had to sit in the Dean’s office with him sitting right there after he had done that to me and look at him. I didn’t even want to be in the same room as him; it was kind of traumatic to even put me in that situation so soon after.