

# Survivors share their stories

“If Title IX’s not going to help the people who have some of the worst possible situations, then why would I want to do that with mine?” - Laura Bergren



Photo by Kevin Donovan

Senior Laura Bergren speaks out on being assaulted in the spring of last year by someone who is still on campus. For the past year, she has been struggling to tell her story.

## 1. What happened?

Mid to late spring term of last year, I was at a friend’s house party in one of the TLAs in Swanson. My friend had recent-

ly become friends with these two guys and I had never heard anything negative about them, but one of them was - and still is - prominent in the English,

creative writing, and kind of the theatre department. We get down to the later hours of the party and these guys show up.

I was pretty heavily intoxicated. We got down to the very end when people were leaving. There was probably a handful of us plus those two. Some of us were in the corner or in their own rooms.

He took that opportunity, since no one was around, to offer me his drink, and I was too intoxicated at that time to recognize, “Oh, maybe not. I’m good.” I took it, and for a good half hour, it was just me drinking straight tequila. He was having me keep drinking.

We ended up at my place and I remember thinking, “I don’t want to do this. I thought I was ready, but I am not.” It was a lot of coercion to get me to cooperate to what he wanted, and then eventually for me it became a

case of “I don’t know what else to do. He’s not listening.” And so I just let him.

It was the most surreal experience I’ve had so far because I knew I was really drunk. I couldn’t feel like I could do anything, so I just let it happen.

For the next day and a half, he would text me poems. I think I gave him – drunkenly – my number. I would never respond because I felt so disgusting and scared of this guy because he had so much power.

It wasn’t that he had more power than I in my department if I came out. If I came out, people would’ve believed me. But knowing that he was always around and still considered this fabulous guy by so many people... I didn’t want to do anything.

I know other people who have been to Title IX and they didn’t

do anything. I didn’t want to go through that my entire senior year while this kid’s around. Even if I filed the report now – which I’m so conflicted on if I ever want to – I don’t think I do, because if I do that, by the time that Title IX gets through, by the way things are going, it’ll be when I graduate. I don’t think I’m going to see this kid again.

## 2. Why didn’t you file Title IX?

I didn’t think they would help. Not to say that my story isn’t valid, but there are so many people who have had it so much worse, and to hear them say, “I was raped by this person and he forced himself upon me,” and them saying “Title IX didn’t do shit for me.”

## 3. Is he still someone on campus?

Yes.

“The administration has to take people seriously... there are things you can do, and I don’t think administration is doing any of them.” -Katie Gorzek

## 1. What happened?

I was dating this lacrosse player my freshman year of college. He doesn’t go here anymore. Our relationship was fine, just not what I was looking for.

When I broke up with him, he came into my room, started yelling at me... people told me they could hear it all down the hall. Nobody came in and did anything about it. He just kept yelling at me, and then he would cry and yell and cry. Then he started throwing all the [expletive] I had lent him across my room, including my TV.

He left me alone for a little while. Then he started texting me again. I blocked his number and he would message me through other texting apps. I blocked him on those, but he would just keep finding ways to talk to me. He waited outside of my classes for me.

There was one night when I

was at a friend’s house. I got a call from my roommate and she’s like, “Hey, are you at home? Your ex keeps calling me and saying he’s in our room. I’m not home – I’m just making sure you’re okay.”

I talked to his roommate – he went over there and had to fireman carry him out because he was so drunk. I didn’t feel safe at this school.

## 2. What resources did the school give you?

I reported it to my CA and she’s like, “Well, since this was a break-in, I do have to report this.” She did and I know he met with Joe Sagar about it. The next year, they made him a CA on a co-ed floor. Joe had to talk to the guy about why this was wrong, and then put him in a position of authority.

He wasn’t suspended from lacrosse or anything. He wasn’t kicked off the team. People knew

about it. And they just let it be.

When he got fired from his CA position, he was placed on the same floor as me in Erickson.

I was scared at the time, but I didn’t know how big of a deal it was until we took that sexual assault class. I was like, “Oh, that was actually stalking.”

It wasn’t just something that people do. That was not okay, and I realized that I repressed a lot of it because I thought, “He did message me on multiple apps.” I had forgotten all about that.

## 3. What will it take to solve these issues?

The administration has to take people seriously. I’ve heard other stories about people who have reported things but then ended up on the same floor as somebody – just like my story. It’s like, there are things you can do, and I don’t think administration is doing any of them.



Photo by Kevin Donovan

Senior Katie Gorzek speaks about a component of Title IX that most don’t usually think of: dating violence and stalking. In her freshman year of college, an experience with an ex-boyfriend turned sour when he began following her and harassing her online, something she only began to identify as a problem until much later.