

Two More Women Sue Stockton University Over Alleged Rapes

Published at 11:30 PM EDT on Jul 30, 2018



Two More Women Sue Stockton U Over Alleged Rapes

WHAT TO KNOW

- Two more women have filed lawsuits against Stockton University in Galloway Township, New Jersey.
- The lawsuit accuses school officials of turning a blind eye to an unsanctioned fraternity known for underage drinking and sexual misconduct.
- One of the newest lawsuits alleges that the fraternity was on campus recruiting new members at freshmen events.

Two more women have filed federal lawsuits alleging that a New Jersey university is partly to blame for sexual assaults after they say school officials turned a blind eye to an unsanctioned fraternity known for underage drinking and sexual misconduct.

A total of four women have filed lawsuits saying they were raped by current and former fraternity brothers at Pi Kappa Phi, an unrecognized fraternity at Stockton University in Galloway, New Jersey. The lawsuits claim the university violated the women's Title IX rights to a safe learning environment because university staff members knew about the conduct at the fraternity, which has been unrecognized by the university for more than eight years but has continued to operate off-campus.

One of the newest lawsuits, all filed by attorney Robert Fuggi Jr., alleges that the fraternity was on campus recruiting new members at freshmen events. The complaint says the recruitment effort was on university property and was sexually explicit.

The lawsuits identify the women by their initials only. The Associated Press does not typically identify people who say they are victims of sexual assault.

The two newest lawsuits similarly describe first-year female students who went to parties at the Pi Kappa Phi house by invitation. One woman described being given a salty green drink while the brothers drank a red drink mixed with alcohol during a 2014 party. The other woman said she was given two beers by fraternity members during a 2017 party.

Both women described feeling lightheaded and disoriented after a small amount of alcohol. The women both had flashbacks of being sexually assaulted and had sore genitals the next day without having a clear memory of what had happened.

One of the women also named a second student not in the fraternity who she said also raped her while she was still disoriented and seeking help.

The university's president, Harvey Kesselman, posted a statement on Saturday saying the university could not comment on individual allegations. He says the public university of 9,500 students about 50 miles (80 kilometers) southeast of Philadelphia is cooperating with authorities and has measures in place to provide a safe and secure campus.

"We require incoming students to attend Orientation and Welcome Programs that specifically address topics such as sexual assault and violence prevention. We also address safety with parents during orientation and urge all to support our guidance and policies. It is vital to our community that we all share the responsibility to respect and protect each other from threatening behavior and situations," he wrote.

The statement does not address the allegation that the fraternity was recruiting on campus during Rush Week.

Fuggi said in the lawsuits that the atmosphere on Stockton's campus is sexually charged and does not provide for a safe learning environment.

The university's website lists seven Greek organizations that have lost their affiliations with the university. The website warns students to stay away from unrecognized groups for safety reasons. It was unclear if the warning was on the school's website prior to the alleged encounters.

Messages left seeking comment from the national Pi Kappa Phi organization were not returned.

Copyright Associated Press