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Berry College responds to federal rape lawsuit

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Rome --- In response to a federal lawsuit charging that Berry College failed to protect a female student from sexual assault, the school is claiming that it provides adequate security for its students.

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The student who filed the suit in November said she was assaulted and raped repeatedly by the same male student over three years. She said she reported the attacks to Berry officials and police but that nothing was done to protect her or prosecute the alleged rapist. The lawsuit claims that Berry was responsible for protecting the woman and that its failure to do so was a violation of Title IX, a federal law prohibiting discrimination against women in educational institutions.

Berry's 25-page response denies any wrongdoing by the four-year college, claiming that Berry acted responsibly in dealing with the alleged incidents.

"The actions or inactions of Berry did not have the systemic effect of denying plaintiff equal access to an educational program or activity in violation of Title IX," the college's response stated.

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The college's response also asked for a change of venue, requesting that the case be moved from the Atlanta federal district court to that of Rome, where Berry is situated.

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The school's filing also asked that the case be dismissed.

Berry lawyer Harvey Gray says the school's response is "simply the beginning phase" in the court proceedings. "Next will be a discovery period, and we'll go from there," he said.

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