Content warning: The following article contains references to sexual assault.

After the Thresher published a Rice alumna’s anonymous opinion about the mishandling of her sexual assault case, students mobilized across campus to express their dissatisfaction through acts of vandalism and defacement, silent protests and petitions. Dean of Undergraduates Bridget Gorman issued an initial statement through the Thresher, followed by an apology by Gorman and President David Leebron on Friday evening.

In the anonymous opinion, the alumna wrote that her assailant was found in violation of the Code of Student Conduct by Student Judicial Programs. She was informed that he would be suspended starting at the beginning of the spring 2019 semester and would be required to apply for readmission. However, her assailant was able to avoid his suspension by graduating early.

“He received a diploma, with all the rights and responsibilities that a degree from Rice confers,” the alumna wrote in her opinion. “When Rice handed him a degree, they handed him a certification that what he had done was fine.”

( Editor’s Note: The Thresher reached out to the alumna who wrote the anonymous opinion for comments. The Thresher granted the alumna continued anonymity in line with our policy of not identifying sexual assault survivors who wish to remain anonymous.)

The alumna said she was dismissed by administrators such as Alison Vogt, the associate dean of students, when she asked about the outcomes of her case and policies that led to his ability to graduate. The alumna said she sent emails to various administrators for clarification but received no response, leading her to then write the opinion.

“I really had to work to get into contact with anyone from the administration,” the alumna said. “But once my [opinion] was published, I was kind of immediately reached out to by a lot of different people.”

Vandalism and Defacement

Around 1 a.m. on Sept. 26, a group of anonymous Rice students plastered the base of William Marsh Rice’s statue with cut-outs of the alumna’s opinion and painted posters with letters spelling “PAY ATTENTION.” Images of the statue were then posted by the Instagram account @justiceforricesurvivors.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: survivors’ stories of sexual assault at Rice

on pages 8-9

Content warning: Pages 8-9 contain graphic references to sexual assault.