

NOTICE OF PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT

Morgan Ford, Ethan Deecher, and Grady Habicht, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated v. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Case No. 1:20-cv-00470-DNH-CFH

ATTENTION: ALL RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE (“RPI”) STUDENTS (OTHER THAN NON-MATRICULATED NON-PAYING STUDENTS) WHO WERE ENROLLED IN ANY RPI COURSE AS OF MARCH 10, 2020 DURING THE SPRING 2020 SEMESTER AND/OR DURING THE SUMMER ARCH 2020 SEMESTER.

The United States District Court for the Northern District of New York has authorized this notice. It is not a solicitation from a lawyer. You are not being sued. If you have received a notice of this lawsuit in the mail or by e-mail, you have been identified as a person who is or may be a member of the settlement class in this lawsuit, and the proposed settlement of this lawsuit, if approved, may affect your legal rights. You should read this notice carefully.

If you were a RPI student who was enrolled in any RPI course as of March 10, 2020 during the Spring 2020 semester and/or Summer Arch 2020 semester and were not a Non-Matriculated/Non-Paying Student (as defined below), and you do not opt out (as described below), then you are part of the proposed settlement class (a “Settlement Class Member”) affected by this lawsuit.

The purpose of this notice is to inform you of a proposed Settlement relating to a class action lawsuit brought by Plaintiffs, students at RPI during the Spring 2020 and Summer Arch 2020 semesters, against RPI, on behalf of a putative class of students who were enrolled at the RPI campus in Troy, New York, in any RPI course as of March 10, 2020. The case is captioned *Morgan Ford, Ethan Deecher, and Grady Habicht, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated v. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Case No. 1:20-cv-00470-DNH-CFH* (the “Action”).

In this Action, Plaintiffs alleged they are entitled to certain damages from RPI representing tuition and fees paid during the Spring 2020 semester and/or Summer Arch 2020 semester when RPI provided classes remotely and closed its campus in Troy, New York, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, Plaintiffs allege that RPI failed to provide educational services, housing, dining and access to on-campus facilities and activities when it transitioned to remote learning. Plaintiffs sought on behalf of themselves and **all** others similarly situated, damages representing of a portion of their tuition and fees for the Spring 2020 and Summer Arch 2020 semesters. RPI denies all allegations of liability on any basis and has denied and continues to deny that it committed, or threatened or attempted to commit, any wrongful act or violation of law or duty alleged in the Action, and there has been no finding of liability in any court. Considering the interest of both RPI and its students in prompt resolution of the matter, RPI and Plaintiffs have agreed that, to resolve this Action, RPI will pay \$6,500,000 into a Settlement Fund to be divided evenly among Settlement Class Members who do not opt out.

The terms of the agreement are set forth in the proposed Settlement that must be approved by the United States District Court for the Northern District of New York. This notice includes information about the proposed Settlement, a final approval hearing scheduled by the Court, and the process for being heard by the Court.

SUMMARY OF THE OPTIONS AND THE LEGAL EFFECT OF EACH OPTION

NOTICE OF PROPOSED CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT

FOR SETTLEMENT CLASS MEMBERS

YOUR OPTIONS	INSTRUCTIONS	DUE DATE
DO NOTHING AND AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE A PAYMENT	If you are a Settlement Class member your payment from the Settlement Fund will be sent automatically to your last known mailing address on file with RPI. You may visit the Settlement Website at www.RPICovidRefundSettlement.com to (a) provide an updated address for sending a check; or (b) elect to receive the Settlement Benefit by Venmo or PayPal instead of a paper check.	See Answer 7.
EXCLUDE YOURSELF FROM THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT	You can choose to “opt out” of the proposed Settlement. Opting out means that you choose not to participate in the proposed Settlement. It also means that you cannot object to the proposed Settlement (see below). If you opt out, you will not receive a payment and you will keep any individual claims you may have against RPI relating to the transition to remote learning in the Spring 2020 and Summer Arch 2020 semesters. For more detailed opt-out instructions, see Answer 11 below.	Postmarked no later than November 6, 2023.
OBJECT TO THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT	You can file an objection with the Court explaining why you believe the Court should reject the proposed Settlement. If your objection is overruled by the Court and the proposed Settlement is approved, then you would be included in the Settlement Class. If the Court agrees with your objection, then the proposed Settlement may not be approved. If you choose to object, you may not also opt out of the proposed Settlement as only participating class members may object to a proposed Settlement. For more detailed objection instructions, see Answer 12 below.	Postmarked no later than November 6, 2023.

These rights and options—and the deadlines to exercise them—along with the material terms of the proposed Settlement are explained further below in this notice.

BASIC INFORMATION

1. What is this lawsuit about?

NOTICE OF PROPOSED CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT

The class action being settled is captioned *Morgan Ford, Ethan Deecher, and Grady Habicht, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated v. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute*, Case No. 1:20-cv-00470-DNH-CFH. This case is a putative class action, meaning that the Settlement Class Representatives—Morgan Ford, Ethan Deecher, and Grady Habicht—brought this action as individuals acting on behalf of a putative class of all people who paid tuition and/or fees during the Spring 2020 semester and Summer Arch 2020 semester for on-campus educational services, housing, and meals, and access to on-campus facilities and activities. The Settlement Class Representative alleged claims for breach of contract, unjust enrichment and promissory estoppel based on RPI’s transition to remote learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. RPI denies all allegations of wrongdoing and there has been no finding of liability in any court. After substantial class discovery, motion to dismiss briefings, and substantial negotiations with the help of Honorable Diane M. Welsh, the Parties came to the proposed Settlement.

2. Why did I receive notice of this lawsuit?

If you received notice of this lawsuit, it is because RPI’s records indicate that you were enrolled at the RPI campus in Troy, New York, in a RPI course as of March 10, 2020 during the Spring 2020 semester and/or during the Summer Arch 2020 semester, and were not a non-matriculated high school student at that time. The Court directed that this notice be made available to all Potential Settlement Class Members because each member has a right to notice of the proposed Settlement and the options available to them before the Court decides whether to approve the proposed Settlement.

3. How do I know if I am part of the Settlement Class?

If you were a RPI student enrolled at the RPI Campus in Troy, New York, in any RPI course as of March 10, 2020 during the Spring 2020 semester and/or during the Summer Arch 2020 semester, and you were not a Non-Matriculated/Non-Paying Student (defined as a student enrolled in a high school, community college, or other college who took one or more courses at RPI during the Spring 2020 semester through a cooperative program, but was not enrolled in an RPI degree program and paid no tuition or fees to RPI for such participation) at that time, and you do not opt out (as described below), then you are part of the proposed settlement class (a “Settlement Class Member”). If you are a Settlement Class Member, you do not have to do anything to participate in and receive the benefits of the proposed Settlement.

4. Why did the Parties Settle?

In any lawsuit, there are risks and potential benefits that come with litigating as compared to settling. It is the Settlement Class Representative’s and their lawyers’ (“Class Counsel”) job to identify when a proposed Settlement offer is sufficient and justifies settling the case instead of continuing to litigate. In a class action, class counsel determines when to recommend settling to the class representatives. The class representatives then have a duty to act in the best interests of the class as a whole when deciding whether to accept this recommendation. In this case, it is the belief of the Settlement Class Representative and Class Counsel that this proposed Settlement is in the best interest of all Settlement Class Members.

RPI denies the claims asserted and believes that its actions were proper and in accordance with the terms of its policies, agreements, and applicable law. RPI denies that its actions give rise to any claim by the Settlement Class Representative or any Settlement Class Members. However, given the benefit that current and former students will receive from a negotiated settlement, RPI considers it desirable to resolve the Action.

5. What must happen for the proposed Settlement to be approved?

The Court must decide that the proposed Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate before it will approve the proposed Settlement. At this time, the Court has already reviewed and decided to grant preliminary approval of the proposed Settlement, after which notice was disseminated to Potential Settlement Class Members. The Court will make a final decision regarding the proposed Settlement at a Final Approval Hearing, which is not yet scheduled.

YOUR OPTIONS

6. What options do I have with respect to the proposed Settlement?

If you are a Potential Settlement Class Member, you have three options with respect to this proposed Settlement: (1) do nothing and be eligible to participate in the proposed Settlement and receive the Settlement Benefit allocated to you according to the terms of the proposed Settlement; (2) opt out of the proposed Settlement; or (3) participate in the proposed Settlement, but object to it. Each of these options is described further below.

7. What are the details and deadlines related to my options?

- a. If you do nothing, and the proposed Settlement is approved by the Court, you will be eligible to participate in the proposed Settlement and to receive the Settlement Benefit allocated to you according to the terms of the proposed Settlement.
 - If you are a Settlement Class Member, your payment from the Settlement Fund will be sent automatically to your last known mailing address on file with the RPI Registrar. Settlement Class Members may visit the Settlement Website at www.RPICovidRefundSettlement.com to (a) provide an updated address for sending a check; or (b) elect to receive the Settlement Benefit by Venmo or PayPal instead of a paper check. These actions must be taken no later than sixty (60) days after the Effective Date, as defined in the proposed Settlement. That date will also be posted on the Settlement Website when it is known, but it will be some time after the Final Approval Hearing.
- b. If you would like to opt out or object to the proposed Settlement, your request must be postmarked no later than **November 6, 2023**.

8. How do I decide which option to choose?

If you would prefer not to participate in the proposed Settlement, then you may want to consider opting out. If you opt out, you will not receive a payment and you will keep any individual claims you may have against RPI relating to the transition to remote learning in the Spring 2020 and Summer Arch 2020 semesters. If you believe the proposed Settlement is unreasonable, unfair, or inadequate and that the Court should reject the proposed Settlement, you may want to consider objecting to the proposed Settlement. The Court will decide if your objection is valid. If the Court agrees, then the proposed Settlement may not be approved. If your objection (or any other objection) is overruled, and the proposed Settlement is approved, then you will still receive a payment under the proposed Settlement and you will be bound by the proposed Settlement. Note that if you do not object to the proposed Settlement, and the proposed Settlement is later approved, you cannot appeal that approval order.

9. Do I have to do anything if I want to participate in the proposed Settlement?

If you are a Settlement Class Member, you are automatically entitled to a payment from the Settlement Fund and your payment will be sent to your last known mailing address on file with the RPI Registrar—unless you visit the Settlement Website at www.RPICovidRefundSettlement.com to (a) provide an updated address for sending a check; or (b) elect to receive the Settlement Benefit by Venmo or PayPal instead of a paper check. These actions must be taken no later than sixty (60) days after the Effective Date, as defined in the proposed Settlement. That date will also be posted on the Settlement Website when it is known, but it will be some time after the Final Approval Hearing not yet scheduled.

OPTING OUT OF THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT

10. What happens if I opt out of the proposed Settlement?

If you opt out of the proposed Settlement, you will preserve any claims you may have against RPI related to RPI's transition to remote learning in the Spring 2020 and/or Summer Arch 2020 semesters. However, you will not be entitled to receive a payment from this proposed Settlement—assuming that the proposed Settlement is approved by the Court.

11. How do I opt out of the proposed Settlement?

To opt out of the proposed Settlement, you must send a written request to the Settlement Administrator at:

Ford v. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
c/o Settlement Administrator
P.O. Box 25226
Santa Ana, CA 92799

The request must:

- a. include a statement requesting to opt out of the Settlement Class;
- b. be personally signed by you;
- c. include your name, address, and either a telephone number or email address; and
- d. include the caption for the Action—*Morgan Ford, Ethan Deecher, and Grady Habicht, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated v. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute*, Case No. 1:20-cv-00470-DNH-CFH.
- e. be postmarked no later than **November 6, 2023**.

A request to opt out of the proposed Settlement that does not meet the above requirements, or that is sent to an address other than that of the Settlement Administrator, will be invalid and the person sending the defective request will remain in the Settlement Class and, if the proposed Settlement is approved by the Court, will receive a payment, and will be bound by the proposed Settlement.

A request to opt out of the proposed Settlement must be done on an individual basis. A Potential Settlement Class Member cannot purport to opt others out of the proposed Settlement on a class or representative basis.

OBJECTING TO THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT

12. How do I object to the proposed Settlement?

You can object to the proposed Settlement, or any part of it, so long as you do not opt out of the proposed Settlement, as only Settlement Class Members have the right to object to the proposed Settlement, including any attorneys' fees sought by Class Counsel. To have your objection considered by the Court at the Final Approval Hearing, your objection must:

- a. Include your name, address, and either a telephone number or email address; and state that you are a Settlement Class Member;
- b. Be personally signed by you, the objecting Settlement Class Member;
- c. Contain a statement that includes all objections, states whether each objection applies only to the objector, to a subset of the Settlement Class, or to the entire Settlement Class, and states the specific reasons for all objections, including any legal arguments and evidentiary support (including copies of any documents relied upon); and
- d. State whether you wish to speak at the Final Approval Hearing, and whether you are represented by counsel.

Your objection and any accompanying papers must be filed with the Clerk of Court. If you are represented by counsel, the objection must be filed through the Court's electronic case filing (ECF) system. All objections must also be mailed at the same time to Class Counsel, RPI's Counsel, and the Settlement Administrator at the addresses below. All objections must be postmarked no later than **November 6, 2023**.

Clerk of Court	Settlement Administrator	Class Counsel	RPI's Counsel
Clerk of the Court United States District Court for the Northern District of New York James T. Foley U.S. Courthouse 445 Broadway Albany, NY 12207	Ford v. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute c/o Settlement Administrator P.O. Box 25226 Santa Ana, CA 92799	POULIN WILLEY ANASTOPOULOU, LLC Attn: Paul Doolittle 32 Ann Street Charleston, SC 29403 cmad@akimlawfirm.com DREYER BOYAJIAN LLP Attn: James R. Peluso, Esq. 75 Columbia Street Albany, New York 12210 info@dblawny.com	BOND SCHOENECK & KING, PPLC - SYRACUSE Attn: Jonathan B. Fellows; Suzanne M. Messer One Lincoln Center Syracuse, NY 13202 fellowj@bsk.com

13. What happens if I object to the proposed Settlement?

If you object to the proposed Settlement, the Court will consider your objection at the Final Approval Hearing. If the Court sustains your objection, or the objection of any other Settlement Class Member, the proposed Settlement may not be approved. If you object, but the Court overrules your objection and any other objections and approves the proposed Settlement, then you will be bound by the proposed Settlement, and you may appeal the approval order to the extent that it overrules your objection.

14. What is the difference between objecting and opting out of the proposed Settlement?

Objecting to the proposed Settlement is telling the Court that you do not believe the proposed Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate for the Settlement Class, and asking the Court to reject it. If you object

to the proposed Settlement and the proposed Settlement is ultimately approved, then you are entitled to a payment and will release any claims related to RPI's transition to remote learning and closure of on-campus services in the Spring 2020 and Summer Arch 2020 semesters. Opting out of the proposed Settlement, however, is telling the Court that you do not want to be a part of the proposed Settlement if it is approved, you do not want to receive a payment, and you will not release claims you might have against RPI that would otherwise have been released by participating in the proposed Settlement.

15. Can I opt out and object to the proposed Settlement?

No. To object to the proposed Settlement, you must participate in the proposed Settlement. Thus, you must choose between opting out or objecting to the proposed Settlement.

THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT PAYMENT

16. How much is this proposed Settlement?

The Parties have agreed to a total Settlement Fund of \$6,500,000.

As discussed in more detail below, attorneys' fees and costs, service awards for the Settlement Class Representatives, and administrative fees, including the costs paid to a third-party Settlement Administrator, will be paid out of the Settlement Fund. Thereafter, the remaining funds—the Net Settlement Fund—will be divided among all Settlement Class Members entitled to payments as outlined in the proposed Settlement and discussed further below in Answer 21.

17. How much of the Settlement Fund will be used to pay for attorneys' fees and costs?

Class Counsel will request that the Court approve attorneys' fees of not more than one-third (1/3) of the Settlement Fund and will request that Class Counsel be reimbursed for their out-of-pocket litigation costs incurred in litigating the Action. Class Counsel must submit their request to the Court which point the amount of the requested attorneys' fees, as well as Class Counsel's motion, will be published on the Settlement Website at www.RPICovidRefundSettlement.com. The Court will then decide the amount of the attorneys' fees and costs based on a number of factors, including the risk associated with bringing the Action, the amount of time spent on the case, the magnitude and complexity of the Action, the quality of the work, and the requested fee in relation to the outcome of the Action.

18. How much of the Settlement Fund will be used to pay the Settlement Class Representatives?

Class Counsel will request that the Settlement Class Representatives, Morgan Ford, Ethan Deecher, and Grady Habicht, be paid an award in the amount of no more than \$10,000 each, in recognition for their work in connection with this case. The award must be approved by the Court.

19. How much of the Settlement Fund will be used to pay administrative expenses?

A third-party Settlement Administrator was retained to provide notice and administer the payments to Settlement Class Members. The expenses of the Settlement Administrator are projected to not exceed \$75,000. In the event that such expenses exceed \$75,000, such additional amounts shall be paid out of

the Settlement Fund only after approval by both Class Counsel and RPI's Counsel.

20. How much will my payment be?

The balance of the Settlement Fund after paying administrative expenses, attorneys' fees and costs, and awards to the Settlement Class Representatives, will be known as the Net Settlement Fund. The Net Settlement Fund will be allocated evenly (i.e., on a pro rata basis) to each member of the Spring 2020 and Summer Arch 2020 classes based on the ratio of (a) the total number of Settlement Class Members to (b) the total Net Settlement Fund. The resulting ratio will be multiplied by the Net Settlement Fund to determine each Settlement Class Member's Settlement Benefit. The total number of Settlement Class Members shall be calculated by adding the students who are members of the Spring 2020 Settlement Class plus the students who are members of the Summer Arch 2020 Settlement Class. Students who are members of both the Spring 2020 Settlement Class and the Summer Arch 2020 Settlement Class shall be entitled to a separate payment as a member of each class. Although the final amount of the Settlement Benefit will depend on determinations to be made by the Court, Class Counsel estimates that Settlement Class Members will receive a Settlement Benefit of approximately \$500.

If you qualify as a Settlement Class Member, and the proposed Settlement is approved, you will receive the Settlement Benefit. Should any students opt out of the proposed Settlement, the amount that would have been distributed to such Potential Settlement Class Member had they not filed an opt-out request will instead be distributed to Settlement Class Members, in equal amounts to each Settlement Class Member.

21. When will I receive my payment?

The Court will hold a Final Approval Hearing to consider whether the proposed Settlement should be approved. If the Court approves the proposed Settlement, then payments will be distributed within sixty (60) days of the date after which the proposed Settlement becomes final, as defined in the Settlement Agreement. Funds for Uncashed Settlement Checks shall be donated, as a *cy pres* award, to (a) the Student Relief Gift Fund and (b) the Graduate Student Relief Gift Fund.

THE FINAL APPROVAL HEARING

22. When and where will the Court decide whether to approve the proposed Settlement?

The Court will hold a Final Approval Hearing at the United States District Court for the Northern District of New York, Alexander Pirnie Federal Building & U.S. Courthouse, 10 Broad Street, Utica, New York 135014. At this hearing, the Court will consider whether the proposed Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate. If objections have been properly submitted, the Court will consider them. The Court may also decide how much to award Class Counsel for attorneys' fees and litigation costs and the amount of the awards to the Settlement Class Representatives. The hearing will be public. The hearing may be virtual, in which case the instructions for viewing the hearing and participating will be posted on the Settlement Website at www.RPICovidRefundSettlement.com. The date and time of the Final Approval Hearing may change without further notice. Please check the Settlement Website for updates.

23. Do I have to come to the Final Approval Hearing?

No. Class Counsel will answer any questions the Court may have. You may attend if you desire to do so. If you have properly submitted an objection, the Court will consider your objection regardless of whether you attend.

24. May I speak at the Final Approval Hearing?

If you are a Settlement Class Member, you may ask the Court for permission to speak at the Final Approval Hearing. If you are objecting and would like to speak at the Final Approval Hearing, you must state in your objection, as described in Answer 12 above, that you wish to be heard at the Final Approval Hearing.

THE LAWYERS REPRESENTING THE CLASS

25. Who are the Attorneys for the Plaintiffs?

The proposed Class Counsel are: Paul J. Doolittle, Esq., Blake G. Abbott, Esq., Poulin | Willey | Anastopoulo, LLC, 32 Ann Street, Charleston, South Carolina 29403; and Donald W. Boyajian, Esq., James R. Peluso, Esq., Dreyer Boyajian LLP, 75 Columbia Street, Albany, New York 12210.

26. Do I have to pay the lawyers bringing this suit on behalf of the Settlement Class?

No. Class Counsel will be paid directly from the Settlement Fund, subject to the Court's approval.

27. Who determines what the attorneys' fees will be?

The Court will be asked to approve the amount of attorneys' fees at the Final Approval Hearing. Class Counsel will file an application for attorneys' fees, which shall not exceed one third (1/3) of the proposed settlement, plus their out-of-pocket litigation costs, and will specify the amount being sought. The amount of the requested attorneys' fees, as well as Class Counsel's motion, will be published on the Settlement Website at www.RPICovidRefundSettlement.com. Settlement Class Members who would like to object to the amount of attorneys' fees sought by Class Counsel may do so by following the instructions described in Answer 12 above.

GETTING MORE INFORMATION

This notice only summarizes the proposed Settlement. More details are contained in the Settlement Agreement, which can be viewed or obtained online at www.RPICovidRefundSettlement.com. In the event of any inconsistency between the Settlement Agreement and this notice, the Settlement Agreement will govern.

For additional information about the proposed Settlement, you should contact the Settlement Administrator as follows:

Ford v. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
c/o Settlement Administrator
P.O. Box 25226
Santa Ana, CA 92799

Toll-free: (833) 200-8584

For more information, you may also contact Class Counsel:

Paul Doolittle at Poulin | Willey | Anastopoulos, LLC, (803) 222-2222 or by emailing cmad@akimlawfirm.com.

**POULIN | WILLEY |
ANASTOPOULO, LLC**
Attn: Paul Doolittle 32 Ann Street
Charleston, SC 29403
(843) 310-6210
cmad@akimlawfirm.com

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Attn: James R. Peluso
75 Columbia Street
Albany, New York 12210
(518) 463-7784
info@dblawny.com

**PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE COURT OR RPI
CONCERNING THIS NOTICE OR THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT.**