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10 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
11 COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CENTRAL DISTRICT
12

13 BRIAN RALSTON, individually and on
14 behalf of all others situated,

15 Plaintiff,

16 v.

17 UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA, a California Corporation; and
18 UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION,
19 form of entity unknown,

20 Defendants.
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FILED
Superior Court of California
County of Los Angeles
08/08/2024
David W. Slayton, Executive Officer / Clerk of Court
By: L. MGreené Deputy

Case No. 22STCV18066

**[PROPOSED] ORDER GRANTING
UNOPPOSED MOTION FOR FINAL
CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT AND
AWARD OF ATTORNEYS' FEES,
EXPENSES, AND SERVICE AWARD**

Date: July 16, 2024
Time: 10:30 a.m.
Dept: Dept. 12
Judge: Hon. Carolyn B. Kuhl

1 Plaintiff Brian Ralston (“Plaintiff” or “Class Representative”) entered into a settlement
2 agreement with Defendants University of Southern California (“USC”) and University of Southern
3 California Alumni Association (“USCAA”) (collectively, “Defendants”), executed October 27,
4 2023, subject to this Court’s approval. The terms of the settlement, including the releases of
5 claims, are set forth in the parties’ First Amended Settlement Agreement (“Settlement”), which
6 was included in the parties’ Motion for Final Approval of Class Action Settlement (see
7 supplemental Brandt Decl.).

8 On November 9, 2023, the Court granted Plaintiff’s Motion for Preliminary Approval of
9 Class Action Settlement and Approval of Class Notice. The Court granted preliminary approval
10 of the Settlement, including the Settlement Class, defined in paragraph 16 of the Settlement as all
11 individuals who completed a USC GRCT Program, did not otherwise have a degree from USC,
12 and whose USCAA membership was revoked and/or not provided to them from January 1, 2000
13 to the date of the Preliminary Approval Order. The Court also granted preliminary approval of the
14 Settlement as being within the range of possible final approval such that notice should be given to
15 members of the Class; approved the Email Notice and Long Form Notice; determined that the
16 proposed plan for distributing the Notice met the requirements of due process, constituted the best
17 notice practicable under the circumstances, and was valid, due and sufficient notice to all members
18 of the Class, complying fully with California and United States law; appointed American Legal
19 Claims Services as the Settlement Administrator; set forth appropriate procedures and deadlines
20 with respect to responding to the notice and obtaining final approval of the Settlement; and set the
21 final approval hearing.

22 Plaintiff moved for final approval of the Settlement and an award of attorneys’ fees,
23 reimbursement of expenses, and service award, and hearings on these motions were held on July
24 16, 2024 and August 8, 2024. Having considered the papers filed in support of Plaintiff’s Motion
25 for Final Approval of Class Action Settlement and Motion for Attorneys’ Fees, Reimbursement of
26 Expenses, and Service Award, updated declarations and filings, and the oral arguments of counsel,
27 good cause appearing, the Court finds and orders as follows:

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- 1 1. The Court approves the Settlement as fair, reasonable and adequate.
- 2 2. The Court certifies, for settlement purposes only, a Class as defined in the
- 3 Settlement and set forth above;
- 4 3. The Court confirms the appointment of Brian Ralston as Class Representative and
- 5 of Singian Law and Stuart Alban Law as Class Counsel;
- 6 4. No Settlement Class Members have objected to the Settlement;
- 7 5. One Class Member requested and was granted exclusion from the Class;
- 8 6. The form of notice and manner of dissemination as previously approved and
- 9 ordered by the Court in its Order granting preliminary approval were reasonably calculated to fully
- 10 and accurately inform members of the Class of all material elements of the Settlement and of their
- 11 opportunity to object or comment thereon or to exclude themselves from the Settlement Class, was
- 12 the best notice practicable under the circumstances and was sufficient notice to all members of the
- 13 Class, and complied fully with California law and due process. The manner of disseminating
- 14 notice substantially complied with the Court’s order granting preliminary approval, and the
- 15 members of the Settlement Class have been provided a full opportunity to participate in the final
- 16 approval hearing.
- 17 7. Each party to the Settlement, including any objectors, intervenors and/or proposed
- 18 intervenors, shall bear its own costs and the fees and expenses of its counsel, except as follows:
- 19 Defendants shall pay Plaintiff’s attorneys’ fees and expenses to Class Counsel in the amount of
- 20 \$165,000, and shall further pay the Class Representative \$2,500 as an incentive award for his
- 21 services as Class Representative. For the reasons stated at the hearings regarding final approval of
- 22 the Settlement on July 16, 2024 and August 8, 2024, and the papers on file herein, the Court has
- 23 determined that the awarded attorneys’ fees and expenses to Class Counsel and incentive award to
- 24 the Class Representative are fair and reasonable. As set forth in paragraph 40 of the Settlement,
- 25 Defendants shall pay the awarded attorneys’ fees and expenses to Class Counsel, as well as the
- 26 incentive award, within thirty (30) days of receipt of all necessary payment and routing
- 27 information.
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1 8. Based on supplemental briefing and argument provided to the Court, it appears that
2 by the time of the Final Approval hearing, of the 1,822 total Class Members there remained 169
3 Class Members with no known email or mailing address, meaning 169 Class Members did not
4 receive a \$50 USC Bookstore Coupon. Accordingly, the Court agrees with the parties that
5 \$8,450.00 (\$50 x 169) shall instead be paid to the USC Heritage Scholarship Fund to benefit USC
6 students seeking financial support for their education and, if possible, those funds should be
7 distributed to GRCT students. USC is ordered to pay \$8,450.00 to the Heritage Scholarship Fund
8 within thirty (30) days of this Order.

9 9. The Court sets a Compliance Hearing for 08/08/2024 at _____ in
10 Department 12 of this Court. At least five days prior to the hearing, Defendants and the
11 Settlement Administrator shall submit a summary accounting, identifying distributions made as
12 ordered herein, the status of any unresolved issues, including Defendants' efforts to ensure their
13 advertising relating to the USC Graduate Certificate Programs ("GRCT") accurately describes the
14 benefits available to GRCT graduates, as set forth in paragraph 36.B of the Settlement, and any
15 other matters appropriate to bring to the Court's attention.

17 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

18
19 Dated: 08/08/2024, 2024



Handwritten signature of Carolyn B. Kuhl in black ink.

Carolyn B. Kuhl / Judge

HON. CAROLYN B. KUHL
LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE