

CAUSE NO. 202583309

NCAOX

AMY CRULL, on behalf of herself and all
others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS,

Defendant.

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF

HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS

011TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**[PROPOSED] ORDER GRANTING PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF
CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT**

Before the Court is Plaintiff's¹ Unopposed Motion for Preliminary Approval of Class Action Settlement (the "Motion"), the terms of which are set forth in a Settlement Agreement between the Settling Parties, with accompanying exhibits, attached as Exhibit 1 to Plaintiff's Memorandum of Law in Support of the Motion.

Having fully considered the issue, the Court hereby **GRANTS** the Motion and **ORDERS** as follows:

1. Class Certification for Settlement Purposes Only. The Settlement Agreement provides for a Settlement Class defined as follows:

All individuals residing in the United States whose Personal Information was potentially compromised in the University of St. Thomas Data Incident which occurred between July 25, 2025 and August 12, 2025, and were sent a Notice Letter.

Specifically excluded from the Settlement Class are:

- (i) The University of St. Thomas, the Related Entities, and their officers and directors; (ii) all Settlement Class Members who timely and validly request exclusion from the

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all capitalized terms used herein have the same meanings as those defined in Section IV of the Settlement Agreement ("SA"), attached to the Motion as ***Exhibit 1***.

Settlement Class; (iii) any judges assigned to this case and their staff and family; and (iv) any other Person found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be guilty under criminal law of initiating, causing, aiding or abetting the criminal activity occurrence of the Data Incident or who pleads nolo contendere to any such charge.

Pursuant to Texas Rule of Civil Procedure 42(e)(1), the Court finds that giving notice is justified. The Court finds that it will likely be able to approve the proposed Settlement as fair, reasonable, and adequate. The Court also finds that it will likely be able to certify the Settlement Class for purposes of judgment on the Settlement because it meets all of the requirements of Rule 42(a) and the requirements of Rule 42(b)(3). Specifically, the Court finds for settlement purposes: (i) the Settlement Class is so numerous that joinder of all Settlement Class Members would be impracticable; (ii) there are issues of law and fact that are common to the Settlement Class; (iii) the claims of the Class Representative are typical of and arise from the same operative facts and the Class Representative seek similar relief as the claims of the Settlement Class Members; (iv) the Class Representative will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the Settlement Class as the Class Representative has no interests antagonistic to or in conflict with the Settlement Class and have retained competent counsel to prosecute this Litigation on behalf of the Settlement Class; (v) questions of law or fact common to Settlement Class Members predominate over any questions affecting only individual members; and (vi) a class action and class settlement is superior to other methods available for a fair and efficient resolution of this Action.

2. Class Representatives and Class Counsel. The Court finds that Plaintiff Amy Crull will likely satisfy the requirements of Rule 42(a)(4) and should be appointed as the Class Representative. Additionally, the Court finds that Raina C. Borrelli of Strauss Borrelli PLLC will likely satisfy the requirements of Rule 42(g) and should be appointed as Class Counsel pursuant to Rule 42(g)(1).

3. Preliminary Settlement Approval. Upon preliminary review, the Court finds the Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate to warrant providing notice of the Settlement to the Settlement Class and accordingly is preliminarily approved. In making this determination, the Court has considered the monetary and non-monetary benefits provided to the Settlement Class through the Settlement, the specific risks faced by the Settlement Class in prevailing on their claims, the good faith, arms' length negotiations between the Settling Parties and absence of any collusion in the Settlement, the effectiveness of the proposed method for distributing relief to the Settlement Class, the proposed manner of allocating benefits to Settlement Class Members, the Settlement treats the Settlement Class Members equitably, and all of the other factors required by Rule 42 and relevant case law.

4. Final Approval Hearing. A Final Approval Hearing shall be held on _____, 201 Caroline Street, 9th floor, Houston, TX 77002 [or via telephone or videoconference], where the Court will determine, among other things, whether (a) this Action should be finally certified as a class action for settlement purposes pursuant to Rule 42(a) and (b)(3); (b) the Settlement should be approved as fair, reasonable, and adequate, and finally approved pursuant to Rule 42(e); (c) this Action should be dismissed with prejudice pursuant to the terms of the Settlement Agreement; (d) Settlement Class Members (who have not timely and validly excluded themselves from the Settlement) should be bound by the releases set forth in the Settlement Agreement; (e) the application of Class Counsel for an award of attorneys' fees, costs, and expenses should be approved pursuant to Rule 42(i); and (f) the application for Class Representative service awards should be approved.

6. Claims Administrator. The Court appoints Simpluris as the Claims Administrator, with responsibility for class notice and settlement administration. The Claims Administrator is

directed to perform all tasks the Settlement Agreement requires. The Claims Administrator's fees will be paid pursuant to the terms of the Settlement Agreement.

7. Notice. The proposed notice program set forth in the Settlement Agreement and the notices and Claim Form attached to the Settlement Agreement as Exhibits A, B, and C are hereby approved. Non-material modifications or amendments to these Exhibits may be made by the Claims Administrator in consultation and agreement with the Settling Parties, without further order of the Court.

8. Findings Concerning Notice. The Court finds that the proposed form, content, and method of giving notice to the Settlement Class as described in the notice program and the Settlement Agreement and its exhibits (a) will constitute the best practicable notice to the Settlement Class; (b) are reasonably calculated, under the circumstances, to apprise Settlement Class Members of the pendency of the Action, the terms of the proposed Settlement, and their rights under the proposed Settlement, including, but not limited to, their rights to object to or exclude themselves from the proposed Settlement and other rights under the terms of the Settlement Agreement; (c) are reasonable and constitute due, adequate, and sufficient notice to all Settlement Class Members and other persons entitled to receive notice; (d) meet all applicable requirements of law, including Rule 42(c); and (e) and meet the requirements of the Due Process Clauses of the United States and Texas Constitutions. The Court further finds that the notice provided for in the Settlement Agreement is written in plain language, uses simple terminology, and is designed to be readily understandable by Settlement Class Members.

The Claims Administrator is directed to carry out the notice program in conformance with the Settlement Agreement.

9. Exclusion from Settlement Class. Any Settlement Class Member who wishes to be excluded from the Settlement Class must individually sign and timely submit written notice of such intent to the designated Post Office box established by the Claims Administrator in the manner provided in the notice. The written notice must clearly manifest a Person's intent to be excluded from the Settlement Class. To be effective, such requests for exclusion must be postmarked no later than the Opt-Out Date, which is no later than 60 days from the Notice Commencement Date pursuant to ¶ 3.2(d) of the Settlement Agreement and as stated in the notice.

In the event that within 10 days after the Opt-Out Date as approved by the Court, there have been more than 100 timely and valid opt-outs (exclusions) submitted, UST may, by notifying Class Counsel and the Court in writing, void the Settlement Agreement. If UST voids the Settlement Agreement, or the Settlement is not otherwise granted final approval, UST will be obligated to pay all Settlement expenses already incurred, excluding any attorneys' fees, costs, and expenses of Class Counsel and service awards to the Class Representative and shall not, at any time, seek recovery of same from any other party to the Action or from counsel to any other party to the Action.

Within seven days after the Opt-Out Date, the Claims Administrator shall furnish to Class Counsel and to UST's counsel a complete list of all timely and valid requests for exclusion.

If a Final Order and Judgment is entered, all Persons falling within the definition of the Settlement Class who do not request to be excluded from the Settlement Class shall be bound by the terms of this Settlement Agreement and the Final Order and Judgment. All Persons who submit valid and timely notices of their intent to be excluded from the Settlement Class shall not receive any cash benefits of and/or be bound by the terms of the Settlement Agreement.

10. Objections and Appearances. A Settlement Class Member (who does not submit a timely written request for exclusion) desiring to object to the Settlement Agreement or the application for attorneys' fees and costs and/or service awards may submit a timely written notice of his or her objection by the Objection Dates and as stated in the notice and on the Settlement Website. The Long Notice shall instruct Settlement Class Members who wish to object to the Settlement Agreement to file their objections with the Court and to mail copies to Class Counsel and UST's counsel. The Notice shall advise Settlement Class Members of the Objection Date deadline for submission of any objections. Any such notices of an intent to object to the Settlement Agreement must be written and must include all of the following: (i) the objector's full name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address (if any); (ii) information identifying the objector as a Settlement Class Member, including proof that the objector is a member of the Settlement Class (e.g., copy of notice, copy of original notice of the Data Incident); (iii) a written statement of all grounds for the objection, accompanied by any legal support for the objection the objector believes applicable; (iv) the identity of any and all counsel representing the objector in connection with the objection; (v) a statement as to whether the objector and/or his or her counsel will appear at the Final Fairness Hearing; (vi) the objector's signature and the signature of the objector's duly authorized attorney or other duly authorized representative (along with documentation setting forth such representation); and (vii) a list, by case name, court, and docket number, of all other cases in which the objector and/or the objector's counsel has filed an objection to any proposed class action settlement within the last three years.

To be timely, written notice of an objection in the appropriate form must contain the case name and docket number *Crull v. University of St. Thomas*, Cause No. 2025-83309, and must be filed with the Clerk of Court by the Objection Date, which is no later than 60 days from the Notice

Commencement Date pursuant to ¶ 3.2(d) of the Settlement Agreement, and served concurrently therewith upon Class Counsel and UST's counsel, postmarked by the Objection Date, established by this Preliminary Approval Order and as stated in the notice. Any objections to the motion for attorney's fees, costs, and service awards must be submitted within 15 days of Plaintiffs filing such motion.

Any Settlement Class Member who fails to comply with the requirements for objecting shall waive and forfeit any and all rights he or she may have to appear separately and/or to object to the Settlement Agreement or the motion for attorney's fees, costs, and service awards, and shall be bound by all the terms of the Settlement Agreement and by all proceedings, orders, and judgments in the Action. The provisions stated ¶ 5.1 and ¶ 7.1 of the Settlement Agreement be the exclusive means for any challenge to the Settlement Agreement. Any challenge to the Settlement Agreement, the final order approving this Settlement Agreement, or the motion for attorney's fees, costs, and service awards shall be pursuant to appeal under the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure and not through a collateral attack.

11. Claims Process. Settlement Class Counsel and UST have created a process for Settlement Class Members to claim benefits under the Settlement. The Court preliminarily approves this Claims Process and directs the Claims Administrator to make the Claim Form or its substantial equivalent available to Settlement Class Members in the manner specified in the notice. The Claims Administrator will be responsible for effectuating the Claims Process.

Settlement Class Members who qualify for and wish to submit a Claim Form shall do so in accordance with the requirement and procedures specified in the notice and the Claim Form. If the Final Order and Judgment is entered, all Settlement Class Members who qualify for any benefit under the Settlement but fail to submit a claim in accordance with the requirements and procedures

specified in the notice and the Claim Form shall be forever barred from receiving any such benefit, but will in all other respects be subject to and bound by the provisions in the Final Order and Judgment, including the releases contained therein.

12. Termination of Settlement. This Preliminary Approval Order shall become null and void and shall be without prejudice to the rights of the Parties, all of whom shall be restored to their respective positions existing before the Court entered this Preliminary Approval Order and before they entered the Settlement Agreement, if (a) the Court does not enter this Preliminary Approval Order; (b) Settlement is not finally approved by the Court or is terminated in accordance with the Settlement Agreement; or (c) there is no Effective Date. In such event, (i) the Settling Parties shall be restored to their respective positions in the Action and shall jointly request that all deadlines be reasonably extended by the Court so as to avoid prejudice to any Settling Party or Settling Party's counsel; (ii) the terms and provisions of the Settlement Agreement shall have no further force and effect with respect to the Settling Parties and shall not be used in the Action or in any other proceeding for any purpose, and (iii) any judgment or order entered by the Court in accordance with the terms of the Settlement Agreement shall be treated as vacated, nunc pro tunc.

13. Use of Order. This Preliminary Approval Order shall be of no force or effect if the Final Order and Judgment is not entered or there is no Effective Date and shall not be construed or used as an admission, concession, or declaration by or against Defendant of any fault, wrongdoing, breach, or liability. Nor shall this Preliminary Approval Order be construed or used as an admission, concession, or declaration by or against the Class Representative or any other Settlement Class Member that his or her claims lack merit or that the relief requested is inappropriate, improper, unavailable, or as a waiver by any Settling Party of any defense or claims they may have in this Action or in any other lawsuit.

14. Continuance of Hearings. The Court reserves the right to adjourn or continue the Final Fairness Hearing and related deadlines without further written notice to the Settlement Class. If the Court alters any of those dates or times, the revised dates and times shall be posted on the Settlement Website maintained by the Claims Administrator. The Court may approve the Settlement, with such modifications as may be agreed upon by the Settling Parties, if appropriate, without further notice to the Settlement Class.

15. Stay of Litigation. All proceedings in the Action, other than those related to approval of the Settlement Agreement, are hereby stayed. Further, any actions brought by Settlement Class Members concerning the Released Claims are hereby enjoined and stayed pending Final Approval of the Settlement Agreement.

16. Schedule and Deadlines. The Court orders the following schedule of dates for the specified actions/further proceedings:

<u>Event</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Defendant Provides Class Member Information to Claims Administrator	14 Days After Entry of Preliminary Approval Order
Deadline For Claims Administrator to Begin Sending Short Form Notice (By First Class USPS Mail or Email if available) ("Notice Commencement Date")	30 Days After of Entry of Preliminary Approval Order
Opt-Out/Objection Dates	60 Days After Notice Commencement Date
Claims Administrator Provides Parties With List of Timely, Valid Opt-Outs	7 Days After Opt-Out Date
Claims Deadline	90 Days After Notice Commencement Date
Motion For Final Approval to Be Filed By Class Counsel	21 Days Prior to Final Fairness Hearing
Motion for Attorneys' Fees, Costs, Expenses, and Service Award to Be Filed by Settlement Class Counsel ("Fee Motion")	15 Days Prior to Opt-Out and Objection Dates
Final Approval Hearing	[COURT TO ENTER DATE AND TIME] No Earlier Than [INSERT] Days After Entry Of Preliminary Approval Order

DONE AND ORDERED in Harris County, Texas on this ____ day of _____, 2026.

Signed:
5/28/2026



PRESIDING JUDGE

Unofficial Copy Office of Marilyn Burgess District Clerk