

From: [REDACTED]@rpi.edu,
To: konwep@rpi.edu,
Cc: littlj3@rpi.edu,
Subject: [REDACTED] - COVID-19 Vaccine Exemption - REMOVED - On behalf of the Vice President for Student Life
Date: Sat, Aug 21, 2021 9:00 am
Attachments: RPI - Religious Exemption Form - [REDACTED] (Signed & Notarized).pdf (484K),
Letter - Notification to [REDACTED] Non-Vaccinated Students.pdf (577K),

Dear Mr. Peter Konwerski,

On Wednesday, August 18, 2021, seven days before my return date, August 25, 2021, to the RPI campus for the Fall 2021 semester, I received the below referenced e-mail, "COVID-19 Vaccine Exemption - REMOVED - On behalf of the Vice President for Student Life."

To say I was shocked is an understatement. Since that day, my parents and I, have tried unsuccessfully to contact you via phone to inquire about the sudden reversal and removal, thus, I write you this e-mail.

RPI students were notified of a Covid-19 vaccine mandate in April 2021. At that same time, we immediately contacted Mr. Kevin C. Readdean, Associate Director, Student Health to inquire about acquiring a Religious Exemption whereby he advised that RPI will accept Religious Exemptions, and provided the form via e-mail.

I submitted, via e-mail and regular U.S. mail, the Religious Exemption form, signed and notarized on May 14, 2021 (see attached). It was accepted and granted without issue. Subsequently, I was assigned on-campus housing (received my requested single room), class schedule, paid tuition, and I was considered properly enrolled at RPI.

I then received an e-mail dated August 10, 2021, "Letter for Exemption Requirement" in reference to Rensselaer requirements and protocols for Covid-19 non-vaccinated students which I signed, and returned via e-mail, to the Student Health Center (see attached).

You then sent the August 18, 2021 e-mail that stated my exemption was removed because RPI "will not be exempting students from the COVID-19 vaccination requirement, based on religion, who did not already have a religious exemption on file prior to Rensselaer's announcement of the COVID-19 vaccination requirement in April 2021."

An RPI representative advised that the reason for the reversal and removal was that "too many students have now requested this exemption."

My religious beliefs are sincere and meaningful. I am the surviving twin of a naturally conceived identical twin pregnancy. My twin sister died in utero during the pregnancy, and my parents were advised that there was excess fluid around my heart which meant probable heart failure as well as thickening in my neck which meant I would have downs syndrome. It was explained to my parents that most likely I would succumb, in utero, within the week, and if I did survive, there would be no quality of life because I would be severely disabled. My parents were advised by doctors that it would be best to terminate the pregnancy. My parents chose to continue with the pregnancy even at the possible risk to my mother's health. My faith has been shaped by knowing my own beginnings and by my own personal development with my relationship to God.

I am an active member as well as a Leader in Rensselaer Christian Association (RCA), and I am scheduled on August 28, 2021 as an RCA volunteer for Navigating Rensselaer and Beyond (NRB). I am also an active member in the Newman Catholic Club, and all my extra-curricular activities at RPI center on my faith.

I hold sincere religious and conscience-based personal beliefs against taking any vaccines, or taking those derived from aborted fetal cell lines, or taking those sold by companies that profit from the sale of vaccines and other products derived from abortion.

I ask RPI to respect my religious and conscience objections and not condition my enrollment, course selection or degree completion on a mandatory vaccination, especially where I have declined on religious grounds.

I worked hard to earn an acceptance letter to RPI, and I am a proud member of the RPI community where I am on the Dean's List. I feel a true sense of belonging being a part of RPI, and love the campus, the student body as well as the curriculum. I am looking forward to returning to campus as a sophomore. I fully admit that I would be devastated if I have to pursue my education at another school because I feel like I found my place here at RPI.

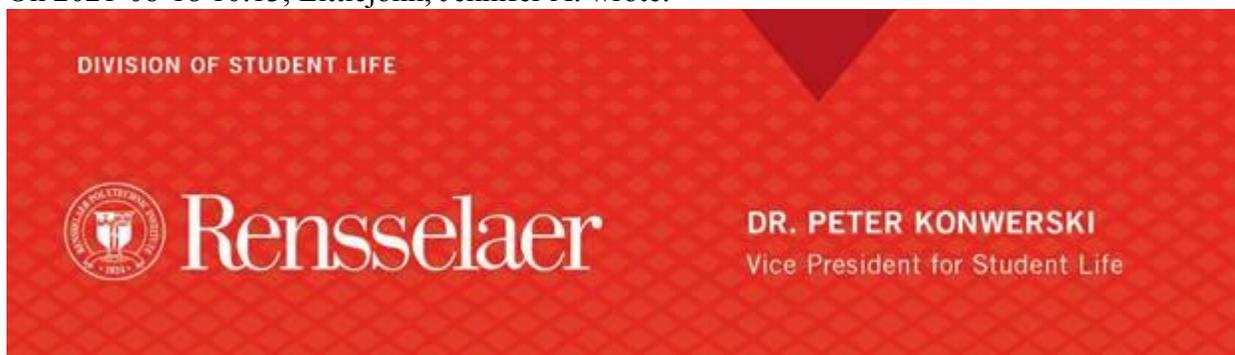
Therefore, I am requesting that my Religious Exemption be reinstated, and that I be allowed to return to campus to continue my education at RPI.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted] rpi.edu
[Redacted]

On 2021-08-18 10:13, Littlejohn, Jennifer A. wrote:



Dear Dear [Redacted]

As you know, Rensselaer is requiring that students enrolled for the 2021-2022 academic year be fully vaccinated against the virus that causes COVID-19. You have requested and may have been preliminarily granted a religious exemption from this requirement. I am writing with our final decision with respect to our policy for accepting religious exemptions from COVID-19 vaccination.

To maintain the safety of our community in light of the worsening pandemic associated with the Delta variant, including serious illness and deaths among the unvaccinated, and the emergence of COVID-19 cases on our campus, we will not be exempting students from the COVID-19 vaccination requirement, based on religion, who did not already have a religious exemption on file prior to Rensselaer's announcement of the COVID-19 vaccination requirement in April 2021. As such, your pending and/or preliminarily approved religious exemption is now removed. To attend Rensselaer for the fall 2021 semester, you must become vaccinated against COVID-19. This requirement will mean that you must have received at least the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine prior to the first day of fall classes on Monday, August 30, 2021, or by the date, you move into campus housing, if earlier, and you must follow through with a timely second dose (where applicable) to remain enrolled.

We understand that this decision is being made just before the start of the fall semester. However, given the recent worsening of the pandemic and our commitment to ensure that members of the campus community are

safeguarded with established protections from COVID-19, we are taking this action at this time. Please see the chart below for guidance on where you may obtain a vaccine in Troy.

Vaccines	Schedule	Location	Contact Information
Moderna; Pfizer- BioNTech	https://www.vaccines.gov/search/	Rite Aid 272 Hoosick Street, Troy, NY 12180	(518) 272-5735
Pfizer- BioNTech	https://www.vaccines.gov/search/	CVS Pharmacy 49 Fourth Street, Troy, NY 12180	(518) 272-1666
Moderna	https://www.vaccines.gov/search/	Market 32 Pharmacy Hoosick Rd, Troy, NY 12180	(518) 266-9947
Moderna; Pfizer- BioNTech; J&J	8/21/2021 from 10am to 12pm (walk-in)	Troy Farmers Market - River Street, Troy	(518) 270-2655
Moderna; Pfizer- BioNTech; J&J	8/30/2021 from 11:30am to 2:00pm (walk-in)	Hudson Valley Community College, 80 Vandenburg Ave, Troy, NY 12180	(518) 270-2655
Moderna; Pfizer- BioNTech; J&J	Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2pm to 4pm (walk-in)	Rensselaer County Health Department 1600 7th Ave, Troy, NY 12180	(518) 270-2655

Sincerely,

Peter Konwerski

Vice President for Student Life

Cc: Travis Apgar, Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students

Leslie Lawrence, M.D., Executive Director for Health and Wellness

