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**New Play, *Spill*, Gets Its Florida Premiere at the University of Florida
and Sheds Light on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill**

Gainesville, Fla., Dec. 11, 2015 – The University of Florida (UF) School of Theatre + Dance is pleased to present *Spill*, a captivating new play about the Deepwater Horizon oil spill of 2010 written by Leigh Fondakowski in collaboration with visual artist Reeva Wortel. The show, directed by Associate Professor Tim Altmeyer, runs Jan. 29-31, 2016 and Feb. 5-7, 2016 in Constans Theatre located in the Nadine McGuire Theatre and Dance Pavilion on UF's campus. Performance times are 7:30 p.m. January 29-30 and February 5-6, and 2 p.m. January 31 and February 7. Tickets for the UF production are \$18 for the general public, \$15 for UF faculty/staff and seniors, and \$13 for students.

Spill is based on interviews conducted by Fondakowski and Wortel with Louisiana residents, fishermen, oil industry and government officials, and families of the victims of the explosion. Fondakowski used this same play development technique when she served as the head writer for the widely influential plays, *The Laramie Project* and *Laramie: Ten Years Later*. She received an Emmy nomination for her screenplay adaptation of *The Laramie Project* for HBO.

Spill takes place in Louisiana and tells the story of its residents in their attempts to confront the natural disaster of the BP oil spill in 2010. The play revolves around individuals, families and communities whose lives were tied to the bayou and how the oil industry came to change their lives in ways they never expected. Patrons will be able to glimpse into the lives of a wide cast of characters, including Shelley Anderson and her husband Jason, a worker on the rig who felt something wasn't right; the rare female worker on the rig; a lawyer whose son perishes in the rig explosion; and even BP executive Tony Hayward. The core of the show centers on the question: What is the true human and environmental cost of oil?

"My hope is that we make flesh and bone what was a news story and what was a current event," said Altmeyer. "We have to make it living and, even though it's not a front page story anymore, it's still ongoing. The ramifications are something we don't know and things haven't been righted. The cleanup and recovery is ongoing."

Altmeyer has directed past School of Theatre + Dance productions such as *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark*; *Angels in America Part 2: Perestroika*; *Madwoman of Chailot* and *Glengarry Glen Ross*.



School of THEATRE + DANCE

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA / COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Jerry Dickey, director of the School of Theatre + Dance, strongly supported the school producing the Florida premiere of this script. "The play offers exceptional opportunities for actor transformation, with actors playing multiple roles," Dickey said. "In addition, the play offers outstanding opportunities in many areas of design, from costumes to lighting and, most notably, projection design."

Spill first went through a series of workshops and staged readings in 2012 and some performances at Wesleyan University, which commissioned the play. An early version of *Spill* premiered in March 2014 at Louisiana State University's Swine Palace Theater in Baton Rouge. A revised version of the play was recently produced by the TimeLine Theatre in Chicago, and ran from October 30 through December 19.

***"A complex story about people's relationship to oil ...
it's an invisible force driving the action." – NPR***

Tickets for the UF production are \$18 for the general public, \$15 for UF faculty/staff and seniors, and \$13 for students. Season and group prices are also available. Tickets are available through the University Box Office located at Gate 1 of the Stephen C. O'Connell Center, by calling 352-392-1653 or at ticketmaster.com. The University Box Office is open Tuesdays through Fridays 12-5:30 p.m. and Saturdays 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Tickets can also be purchased at the Constans Theatre Box Office starting 45 minutes prior to the performance.

The Nadine McGuire Theatre and Dance Pavilion is located at 687 McCarty Drive, Gainesville, FL 32611. On-campus parking is available at the Reitz Union garage and the Museum Road parking lot. Guests are strongly encouraged to pick up tickets early, as shows run the risk of being sold out.

About the School of Theatre + Dance

The School of Theatre + Dance is one of the University of Florida College of the Arts' institutionally-accredited schools. Undergraduate students can pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in acting, dance, musical theatre, theatre production—including costume design, lighting design and scenic design—or a Bachelor of Arts degree in dance studies or general theatre. Minors are also offered in dance and theatre as well as certificates in arts in medicine and dance in healthcare. Student organizations, showcase programs and other intensives provide students with invaluable professional experiences. UF is home to three School of Theatre + Dance performance venues, including the Constans Theatre, Black Box Theatre and G-6 Studio. To learn more about the School of Theatre + Dance, including upcoming performance dates and ticket information, visit www.arts.ufl.edu/theatreanddance.

About the College of the Arts

The College of the Arts is one of the 16 colleges and more than 150 research centers and institutes at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida. The College of the Arts offers baccalaureate, master's and Ph.D. degree programs in its three institutionally-accredited schools — the School of Art + Art History, School of Music and School of Theatre + Dance. The college is home to the Center for Arts in Medicine, Center for Arts and Public Policy, Center for World Arts, Digital Worlds Institute, University Galleries and the New World School of the Arts in Miami. More than 100 faculty members and approximately than 1,200 students work together daily to engage, inspire and create. The college hosts more than 300 performances, exhibitions and events each year. Faculty and students also exhibit and perform at other local, national and international venues. To learn more, visit www.arts.ufl.edu.

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