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Media Contact: Kevin Kopjak, Charles Zukow Associates | 415.296.0677 | kevink@charleszukow.com

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American Conservatory Theater joins forces with Mills College to Offer new Theater Studies Degree Program

SAN FRANCISCO (March 11, 2014) – **American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.)** announced today that they will be partnering with Oakland’s **Mills College** on a new theater curriculum beginning in the fall 2014 term. The development of the new major and minor program marks another milestone in the College’s proud legacy as a center of cutting-edge arts education.

Through the A.C.T. partnership, Mills students will learn the best of theory and practice and have access to world-class theater professionals at an organization known internationally for its groundbreaking productions of classical works and bold explorations of contemporary playwriting.

“This innovative theater major with A.C.T. combines the artistic discipline and training of an intense studio program and the intellectual rigor and scholarly breadth of a first-class liberal arts college,” said **Kimberley L. Phillips**, Mills provost and dean of the faculty.

“The students will participate in interdisciplinary collaborations with various Mills departments, experience the professional atmosphere of A.C.T., a Tony Award—winning regional theater, and engage in San Francisco’s vibrant artistic and diverse cultural community. This new bachelor of arts is the ideal program for the student who desires both an academic and experiential theater education as a foundation for her future endeavors,” said Phillips.

About the Mills-A.C.T. Theater Curriculum

The new Mills theater major is designed with a mixture of courses that are taught on and off campus. Half of these requirements will be offered at Mills in the Dance and Theater Studies Department in Oakland. The remaining courses are to be taken as a “study abroad” at A.C.T., in their studios in downtown San Francisco. The curriculum will expand from seminars to practicum classes and will include interdisciplinary collaborations and performance opportunities.

In order to complete A.C.T.’s requirements, students will have the choice to register for the full [San Francisco Semester program](#), an intensive fall or spring semester (four days a week) or to register as a part-time student, taking a course or two a term, while completing their BA at Mills.

“The San Francisco Semester will let A.C.T. offer an intensive educational experience and cultural adventure to college age actors. The semester stands alone, but is designed as a deep, immersive experience that is also a natural next step after our Summer Training Congress and a perfect precursor to our MFA program,” said Conservatory Director **Melissa Smith**. “We are tremendously excited about expanding the cohort of young adult acting talent under our roof and look forward to the energy, vitality and creativity that these undergraduates will bring to our artistic and community.”

Those students who wish to minor in theater studies will have the unique opportunity, through their choice of electives, to design their minor with an emphasis on drama or physical theater. The minor draws heavily from the curriculum of the Mills Dance Department, which already has a strong theatrical component in its course work.

About American Conservatory Theater

American Conservatory Theater is a Tony Award-winning theater and educational institution dedicated to nurturing the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive actor training in its conservatory, and an ongoing engagement with its community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff and Executive Director Ellen Richard, A.C.T. embraces its responsibility to conserve, renew, and reinvent our relationship to the rich theatrical traditions and literatures that are our collective legacy, while exploring new artistic forms and new communities. A commitment to the highest standards informs every aspect of A.C.T.'s creative work. A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season in 1967. Since then, A.C.T. has performed more than 350 productions to a combined audience of more than seven million people. A.C.T. reaches more than 250,000 people through its productions and programs every year.

About Mills College

Nestled in the foothills of Oakland, California, Mills College is a nationally renowned, independent liberal arts college offering a dynamic progressive education that fosters leadership, social responsibility, and creativity in approximately 1,000 undergraduate women and 600 graduate women and men. The College ranks as one of the *Best 378 Colleges* in the country and one of the greenest colleges in the nation by The Princeton Review. *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Mills one of the top-tier regional universities in the country and lists it among the top colleges and universities in the West in the "Great Schools, Great Prices" category. For more information, visit www.mills.edu.

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