



# ELMIRA COLLEGE

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

January 31, 2017

Contact:

Jennifer L. Swain  
Director of Communications and Marketing  
(607) 735-1894 - Office  
jswain@elmira.edu

## Theatre Season Continues with *Informed Consent*

Elmira, New York – The Elmira College Theatre Program continues its 2016-2017 season with a production of *Informed Consent* February 9-12 in Gibson Theatre, Emerson Hall.

How do we as a people deal with scientific breakthroughs that seemingly happen at breakneck speed? Where is the intersection of science, ethics, and humanity when considering new, challenging innovations? These are questions posed in Deborah Zoe Laufer's drama, *Informed Consent*.

Based upon a 1990s confrontation between a Native American tribe and the University of Arizona, *Informed Consent* concerns the attempt of a young scientist to study the genomes of a tribe debilitated by diabetes. She must first gain permission to take samples of blood from the tribe's members – no easy task as blood is sacred to their people. When permission is finally obtained, the results are disheartening, finding no linkage between the people, their lifestyle, and diabetes.

Rather than end the study, the scientist decides to use the blood to study other diseases. To do so, she studies interbreeding among the people and possible migratory patterns for the tribe. No consent for any such study has been given. The results found contradict the very beliefs the people's lives are based upon. They demand their blood be returned.

Critical reaction to *Informed Consent* has been outstanding. The New York Times called it a "Critics' Pick! A thoughtful and engrossing play...that raises questions about the potential conflicts between scientific discovery and religious beliefs." The Cleveland Plain Dealer agreed, "It's the kind of work live theater needs more of - urgent, challenging and of the moment, grappling with concepts that scare and intrigue us."

Featured in the Elmira College cast are Kallah Turner '18 as the scientist Jillian, Casey Stewart '19 as her husband Graham, Charlea Smith '17 as the tribal spokesperson Arella, with Trevor Stone '18 and Sarah Kaschalk '17 who each play multiple roles. The production is directed by Professor John J. Kelly.

Performances of *Informed Consent* will be held Thursday, Friday and Saturday, February 9, 10, and 11 at 8:00 p.m., with a matinee Sunday, February 12 at 2:00 p.m. All performances are held in the Gibson Theatre on the Elmira College campus. Entry is free and open to the community. No reservations are accepted; seating is first-come, first-served. For additional information, call 607-735-1981.

### **About Elmira College**

Elmira College is a private, coeducational, Phi Beta Kappa college founded in 1855, located in Elmira, New York. The College has an undergraduate enrollment of approximately 1,200 full-time mostly-residential students, and is the guardian of Quarry Farms where Mark Twain summered for decades and where he wrote many of his most iconic novels and is today a research center for visiting Twain scholars. The College has been ranked as a Best College in the Northeast by the Princeton Review and a Top Tier regional liberal arts college by US News & World Report, which has also ranked Elmira College as one of the leading colleges nationally for student internships. The Philadelphia Inquirer cited the Elmira College campus as 'picture postcard perfect.'

-EC-

Photo attached:

Caption: The Elmira College Theatre Program continues its 2016-2017 season with a production of *Informed Consent* February 9-12 in Gibson Theatre, Emerson Hall.