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For Immediate Release:

BOSTON COLLEGE WELCOMES BACK PAUL Daigneault AS 2011-2012 MONAN PROFESSOR IN THEATRE ARTS

Chestnut Hill, MA (March 31, 2011) – The Boston College Theatre Department is pleased to announce that theatre educator, stage director, and arts leader Paul Daigneault will serve as the Rev. J. Donald Monan, S.J. Professor in Theatre Arts for the 2011-2012 academic year.

Paul Daigneault is the Founder and Producing Artistic Director of SpeakEasy Stage Company in Boston, a mid-sized resident regional theater that is currently celebrating its twentieth season. His leadership has made SpeakEasy one of the most successful and respected professional theaters in New England, with a strong reputation for producing regional premieres of contemporary musicals and plays. He has directed more than half of SpeakEasy's roughly one hundred productions over the past twenty years, including Annie Baker's Body Awareness (as part of Shirley, VT Play Festival) and the musical Nine in the current 2010-2011 season.

Daigneault is a 1987 graduate of Boston College, the first BC alum to hold the prestigious Monan Professorship in Theatre Arts. During his year-long residency, he will direct a production of Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's critically acclaimed musical Into the Woods as part of the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Robsham Theater Arts Center. He will also teach an advanced class in Musical Theater Performance, serve as a mentor to student directors, and guest lecture in other courses.

"I look forward to returning to BC to work with students over the course of an entire school year," Daigneault said. "I'm curious to see how things have changed since I was a student a generation ago."

Daigneault has not been a stranger to Boston College in recent years. For the Theatre Department, he directed Craig Lucas's Blue Window in 2002 and the irreverent musical Urinetown in 2008. In 2007, in recognition of his success with SpeakEasy, Paul received the Alumni Award for Distinguished Achievement from the Arts Council of Boston College.
"Paul will be a great inspiration to our students," said Scott T. Cummings, Chair of the Theatre Department. "Anybody can start a theatre company. It takes a rare combination of talents to keep it alive, growing, and prospering to the point where twenty years on it is a major regional arts organization. That is a tremendous achievement."

After graduating from Boston College, Daigneault spent several years pursuing a theatre career in New York City before returning to Boston in 1992 to start SpeakEasy with the help of some of his BC friends. In its early days, the fledgling operation worked out of St. Augustine's School in South Boston where Paul taught sixth and seventh grade. In 2007, SpeakEasy was named the Pavilion Resident Theater for the Boston Center for the Arts, where it performs in the Nancy and Ed Roberts Studio Theater for more than half the year. In 2008, the company received StageSource's Theater Hero Award, given annually to "an exceptional member of the Greater Boston theatre community who has demonstrated a history of service and commitment to the community through leadership, support, inspiration, innovation and promotion of the art of theatre throughout the region." SpeakEasy employs 120 actors, designers, and production staff annually, making it a mainstay for many of Boston’s most talented theater professionals. Over the years, SpeakEasy productions have won many awards, including five Elliot Norton Awards in 2010 alone.

The Monan Professorship in Theatre Arts was established in 2007 by a generous gift to Boston College in honor of University Chancellor and former BC President J. Donald Monan S.J.. The position, which also commemorates the late Trustee E. Paul Robsham, enables the Theatre Department to bring nationally and internationally known professional theatre artists to Boston College to teach and work with undergraduate students. Daigneault will be the fifth visiting Monan Professor in Theatre Arts, following actor Karen MacDonald in the current 2010-2011 academic year, as well as director Carmel O'Reilly, actor Remo Airaldi, and Broadway music director Mary Mitchell Campbell.

For more information on Paul Daigneault, the Monan Professorship, or the BC Theatre Department, contact Scott T. Cummings at 617-552-4012.

[MEDIA NOTE: Paul Daigneault, Rev. J. Donald Monan, S.J. Professor in Theatre Arts for the 2011-2012 academic year. Photo by Doug Saglio Photography.]

BOSTON COLLEGE THEATRE DEPARTMENT - In 1865, two years after Boston College opened, theater began at BC. It continued for many years as a student activity under the aegis of the Dramatics Society. In the early 1970s the College of Arts and Sciences established a theater major as part of the Department of Speech, Communications and Theatre. The Robsham Theater Arts Center opened in 1981 as the center of theater production on campus. In 1993 the Theatre Department was established as an independent department. Since then, both the academic and production programs have grown steadily in terms of faculty staff, theater majors, course offerings, and the quality and quantity of productions. For more information go to www.bc.edu/theatre.

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