



Theater director celebrates return to stage

INTERVIEW BY DALTON ELLIOT
STAFF WRITER

The Clackamas Print: How is the theater handling COVID restrictions?

Jim Eikrem: We are doing face to face classes, I'm thankful that the administration approved our return to campus plan. We're all masked, we're keeping six feet of distance in the rehearsal, as well as in the classes. We have an acting class, we have an improv class, we have a student-directed one act play, stand up comedy class, which Chris Whitten teaches, and then of course, the mainstage production. It's very busy, very, very, very busy, long hours. But we're adapting and that's something about theater, it adapts.

TCP: What are your expectations for the theater going forward?

Eikrem: Well, presumably, things will be at a point where the virus is no longer virulent, and as life threatening, and my hope is, it becomes normal for people to understand that they need to get a flu shot every year, and that, we treat it more like that, rather than this devastating pandemic that's happening. If we can get back more to that, then we can see how our productions and our classes and

everything if the school can return to what may be a more normal operation before the pandemic hit.

TCP: How do you keep your students engaged during times like these?

Eikrem: Trying to recognize the obstacles to their lives and their education, trying to be as gracious as possible, towards challenges that they're facing, not only the students, but everybody who is working to try to make this thing work. My students want to be here, it's very evident that they want to be here. My attendance is excellent, they're hungry to do this. And I'm very pleased to be able to offer that.

TCP: What has teaching at Clackamas been like?

Eikrem: Well, it has given me much more opportunity to focus on things like directing. I very much enjoy this age in community college, there's a lot more variety. My first term here, I had not only a lot of young people, probably 18, but also an 80 year old woman. It's given me an opportunity to have a lot more control over what I teach with a student body that I very, very much appreciate.

Anna Robert, far left, Traveler Gates, center, and Jacob Dreyer, above, perform in "Private Eyes."