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PHOTO BY DAN KELLEY

Sexual Assault speaker Mike Domitrz conducts a role playing exercise with a female volunteer during Sunday's convocation. The task force for sexual assault and relationship violence brought Domitrz to campus to raise awareness.

"May I kiss you?" Mike Domitrz speaks about sexual assault

by Dan Kelley

Not only is it sexy to ask permission before you lean in to kiss your date goodnight, it's the right thing to do. That's the message Mike Domitrz delivered to about 300 students Sunday night in Kresge Auditorium. Domitrz used personal examples and simulations to illustrate his points about communication, relationships and dating. According to Domitrz, traditional sexual assault programming is missing the point. " 'No means no' is one of the worst lines anyone ever came up with," he said. "We should be wearing buttons that say, 'Did you ask?'" Domitrz said by asking permission before engaging in any sort of sexual action, "you not only demonstrate respect, but you eliminate the fear that you're only out to get some."

The informal approach to the topic seemed to connect well with the audience of mostly freshmen, who were encouraged to attend with their mentor groups. "It's important to make contact with first-year students because of the dynamic of the first-year program," said Angie Nally, DePauw police officer. Chris Niles, director of first-year programs, said performances like Domitrz's give people permission to talk about sexual assault issues with other students. "That's really what needs to be happening," he said. Senior Ben Marston agreed. "You need to have these kind of convocations as a group, men and women together," said Marston, a peer mentor, a position with the first year program. "It's different when you put men in a room with their speaker and women in a room with their speaker." According to Nally, the Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence Task Force, which brought Domitrz to campus, tries to use innovative programming to address sexual misconduct issues. Nally said the task

force is trying to tie sexual assault education in with the Building a Responsible Community campaign, initiated by University president Bob Bottoms in March to curtail high-risk alcohol consumption on campus. Nally said DePauw's sexual assault problem was no bigger than that of any other institution. "Is it worse than anywhere else? No," she said. "But is it an issue? Absolutely."

Domitrz questioned the normal date, on which a man assumes what the woman wants, and then acts accordingly. "The average male's actions on a date [are] not far from the motivations of a serial rapist," Domitrz said in his book, "May I Kiss You." He said that this, combined with the fact that "women are taught to please more than men" is the cause of many sexual assaults. At one point, when Domitrz asked the crowd how many of them thought there would be a sexual assault or rape on DePauw's campus this weekend, more than 50 students raised their hands. Chances are, though, if a sexual assault or rape does happen, it will go unreported, according to Nally, who said underreporting is a problem at DePauw as well as other institutions. "What you hope will happen is that your numbers go up [after a speaker like Domitrz], because that means people feel comfortable coming to you," she said. Nally said the University's sexual misconduct policy, which was recently rewritten, is now easier to read. She hopes it is more student-friendly and a tool people will use.

END OF ARTICLE

Commentary on Article by Mike Domitrz

In the article where it said, *'No means no' is one of the worst lines anyone ever came up with,*" I was stressing that our society should be putting the responsibility on the person "making the moves" instead of on the victim. This comment was in reference to moving society's focus away from blaming the victim and to start putting the blame where it belongs ~ on the perpetrator.