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Air Force ROTC Corps Commander Bridget Gleason.

Air Force ROTC led by woman

by Lisa Cline
Staff Writer

Some people say the military is a man’s world, but Corps Commander Bridget Gleason of the Air Force Reserve Officers’ Training Corps has never found it difficult to pass muster.

“I’ve never had any problem getting (the cadets) to listen to my orders,” Gleason said.

And they had better listen to Gleason because, according to Lt. Col. Jerome Palanuk, professor of aerospace studies, “She’s the head-honcho of all of the cadets.”

At the highest ranking officer in the Air Force ROTC, Gleason is responsible for preparing all 80 cadets to serve as officers in the United States Air Force.

Gleason said being a woman has never affected her chances of succeeding in the corps. She said the cadets respect her abilities as an officer and are not concerned with her gender.

“Within the military, you are an officer first. Rank comes before the sex of a person,” Gleason said.

Capt. Andrea Kaussner, assistant professor of aerospace studies, agreed. “A person’s sex is not an issue in the military,” Kaussner said. Overall, she said, the cadets have been very supportive of Gleason.

One of just 10 women in the corps, Gleason’s many duties include planning and coordinating all cadet activities, supplying a plan of operations for each weekly lab and chairing all of the various Air Force ROTC boards.

The senior nursing student also published a 100-page cadet handbook outlining the rules and regulations for running the corps.

Gleason, who will serve four years active duty after graduating in May, said she is not certain whether she will pursue a career in the military. But Gleason did add that any woman considering joining the armed services should “go for it.”