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The 2003-4 Luther S. and Dorothy Cecilia Cressman Lecture in the Humanities



The "Deep Structure" of the Arts

A slide lecture by independent scholar and writer
Ellen Dissanayake

Thursday, May 6, 2004 7:30 p.m.
177 Lawrence Hall University of Oregon

This lecture is free and open to the public, and will be followed by a book signing and sale. Dissanayake's UO visit is cosponsored by the Institute of Cognitive and Decision Sciences. For information or disability accommodations, please call (541) 346-3934. The University of Oregon is an EO/AA/ADA institution.

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Oregon Daily Emerald
P.O. Box 3159, Eugene OR 97403

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University ROTC program grows despite discordance

The military program has 10 more cadets this year, making total enrollment 85

By Chelsea Duncan
Senior News Reporter

The University's ROTC program has grown steadily over the years as students step up to serve their country in the face of conflicts in the Middle East.

Military science Professor Lt. Col. John Sneed said the program has 10 more cadets than it did last year. There are 85 students enrolled this year, including 24 seniors, and cadets are training to become commissioned officers in the Army, the National Guard or Army Reserves, he said.

"That is as high as it has been probably for at least 20 years," he said, adding that he feels the growth is due to a "healthy core" of individuals willing to make the commitment to service and leadership.

Sneed said this is the first year the program has met its commission mission in 11 years. The goal is to commission 12 seniors as lieutenants each year and to contract 20 junior cadets who will become commissioned officers later. Sneed said 18 of the 24 seniors will climb to the rank of lieutenant.

Most of those seniors will go into active duty once they graduate, and thanks to the program's quality, they all received their first or second branch choice, Sneed said. The senior cadets in the program ranked the highest on the national merit list out of 17 Northwestern universities with ROTC programs, he added.

"That's our sign of how healthy our program is," he said.

Cadet Capt. Michael Harris, who is majoring in political science, will graduate in June, and next March he will be deployed for active duty in South Korea. Once he becomes active, he will be ranked as a second lieutenant and will command about 30 soldiers in the area of field artillery, he said.

He said the time will hopefully give him the chance to learn a new language and immerse himself in another culture.

"I'm looking forward to it actually," Harris said.

But while cadets are learning how to become leaders for their future time in the service, they are also facing challenges as students in uniform. Some students say they have been harassed on campus.

"It can be interesting at times," sophomore ROTC cadet Shawn Cooper said. He added that the few times he has been harassed on campus, it was not by students but rather community members who hang around campus.

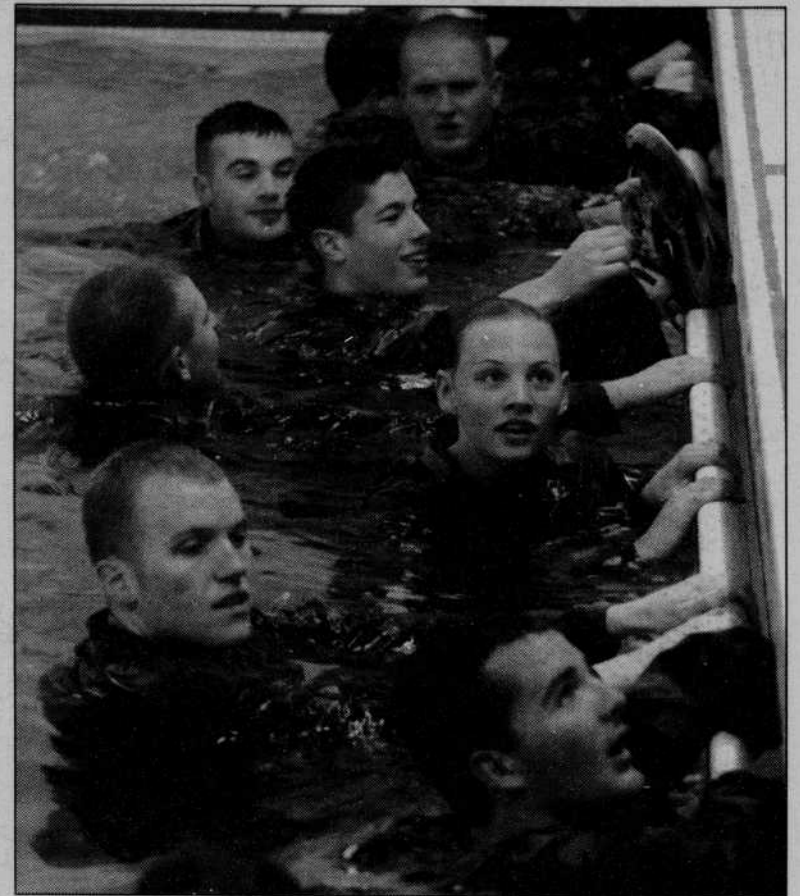
"I get great responses from students," he said. "As far as the University itself goes, it's fine."

He said he experienced more harassment last year than this year in the form of verbal attacks. For example, Cooper said he has been called a "baby killer" when walking on campus in uniform.

"You get the occasional comment, and it's something you're always aware of," he said.

Cooper said he has no regrets for joining the program considering the harassment or the war in Iraq. He said the program has given him a sense of camaraderie he feels can't be found anywhere else on campus.

"The greatest positive thing about this



Tim Bobosky Photographer

From bottom: Troy Givens, Brandon Garner, Robi Harding and other ROTC cadets practice their water skills Wednesday in the Gerlinger Pool.

is the community it creates," he said.

Harris agreed his time on campus has been "interesting." He said it can be difficult when people can't look past the uniform.

"They automatically make assumptions about you as a person," he said, adding that people assume all cadets are conservatives when in fact there are many liberals in the program.

But he said the atmosphere has become much more supportive since the war and since Sept. 11, and he has heard of fewer instances in which students or others spit at cadets or call them "baby killers."

"That sort of thing has stopped quite a bit," he said.

Second-year cadet Sabrina Vasquez said she has never been harassed on campus, but some of her friends have. Vasquez, one of 16 female cadets, said the challenges of being in uniform have not deterred her from wanting to serve her country.

"I've been looked at funny for being in uniform," she said. "Most of the time we shrug it off."

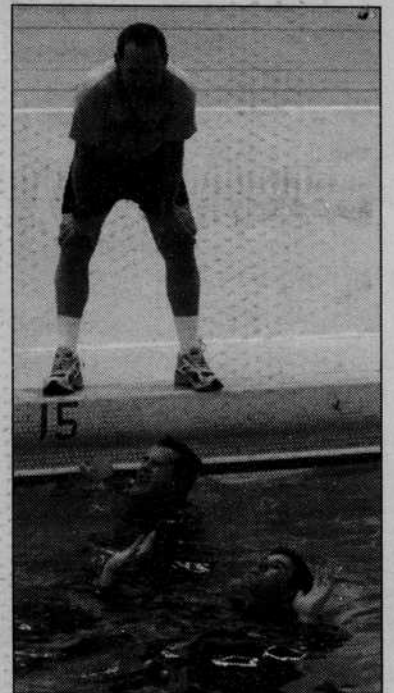
Sneed said he hasn't heard of any severe instances of harassment in recent years, just the occasional heckling. He said learning to be comfortable in uniform is part of learning how to be an officer, and cadets should feel proud walking around campus.

"There's no reason to be ashamed of wearing the uniform on campus," he said.

Junior Briana Freeburg said she was surprised to hear cadets are occasionally harassed on campus because she often sees students stopping to talk to cadets to offer support.

"I see a lot of people talking to them about the war," she said.

Fourth-year University student Don Goldman, who also writes for The Insurgent, said even though he is against the military, he wouldn't harass cadets.



Tim Bobosky Photographer

From top: Military science instructor Darren McMahon coaches cadets Troy Givens and Jacob Craven on water survival in the Gerlinger Pool on Wednesday.

"I would never do that because I just think it's counterproductive," he said.

Junior Josh Berger said he respects cadets who wear uniforms on campus.

"I just think it's a good thing to show what you believe in," he said.

Harris said he understands the campus is a place where people can become "fired up" about issues, but he finds it ironic when people accost cadets who will eventually fight for everyone's freedom of speech.

"It's kind of a bittersweet thing," he said.

Contact the higher education/student life/student affairs reporter at chelseaduncan@dailyemerald.com.