Symposium focuses on OSU’s influence in international arena

By Stephanie Warsmith
Lantern staff writer

Ohio State is an international institution that must work hard to meet the challenges of a global environment for higher education, administrators and faculty said Friday.

Yuri Nikolaevich Afanas’ev, current director of the Russian State University of the Humanities and former advisor on reform to Mikhail Gorbachev, was one of the speakers at the International Symposium held April 23 at the OSU Faculty Club.

Ada Demb, vice provost for international affairs, said the symposium is the first in a series that will focus on Ohio State’s involvement in the international arena.

“The university has a huge amount of activity in the international area but we could get a large advantage if we took a strategic look at it,” Demb said.

Demb said OSU President E. Gordon Gee, deans of various colleges and members of the Board of Trustees were among those invited to the symposium.

Demb asked the participants to try and answer two questions during the afternoon, based on what they learned from the speakers: how to identify the institutions with which the university should be building relationships and how to move to being a global university.

“The university is not bounded by physical borders, it stretches across the world,” said Gee, who addressed the symposium before it began.

“The world has shrunk and opportunities have increased.”

Afanas’ev discussed the structure and format of the Russian State University of the Humanities, which has survived even through Russia’s great economic and political hardships of the past several years.

David Patton, assistant director of the OSU Center for Slavic and East European Studies, acted as Afanas’ev was asked what he thought the outcome of this week’s referendum in Russia would be. He said he thought Russian President Boris Yeltsin would get the majority of the vote.

“Regardless of the referendum, bright, sunny, cloudless days are not in Russia’s future,” Afanas’ev said. He said the government is going in the direction of authoritarianism in which power is concentrated in one person who is not constitutionally responsible to the people.

“Ohio State’s global needs are increasing exponentially but its budget remains the same,” said Allan Wildman, the director of the OSU Center for Slavic and East European Studies, who also addressed the symposium.

“In an era of shrinking resources and competing budgets, tough decisions will have to be made,” he said.

Wildman said Ohio State’s access to materials and information in Russia has dramatically increased. Many OSU students this year are in Russia going through archives.

Wildman believes a strong foreign language curriculum is essential for Ohio State to achieve its global mission.

“Instruction of foreign language is critical to anything we want to do on a global level,” he said.
Students to attend international forum

By Brad Jones
Lantern staff writer

Ohio State has been chosen as one of 20 educational institutions from around the world to participate in a forum on international relations.

Students from 10 universities from the United States and 10 abroad will attend an international student symposium on international negotiation at The Hague in the Netherlands this summer.

The month-long symposium focuses on resolving international conflicts and is sponsored by the Washington, D.C., based Institute for International Mediation and Conflict Resolution.

"The program is for students who are interested in being major players in the international scene," said Charles Peterson, spokesman for the institute.

The program is looking for students who are bright, articulate, well-read and sociable to apply for the symposium, Peterson said.

"The students need to work well with others," he said. "Students from the U.S. and other countries will be broken down into negotiation teams and given case studies of international conflicts to solve," Peterson said.

G. John Ikenberry, a political science professor at the University of Pennsylvania, is on the institute's board of advisers and said this is the first time OSU students have been invited to apply for the program.

"It is an incredible experience for students interested in international relations to have a hands-on, personal feel about what is involved in world politics and international policy," Ikenberry said.

Peterson also said the students involved with the symposium will be able to speak with world leaders about their experiences in conflict, including negotiators from the Palestine and Israeli conflict.

"The students will be trained by the Dutch diplomatic corps and learn specific techniques on how to resolve international conflicts," Peterson said.

Students will also receive college credit for attending the symposium.

OSU students interested in applying for the International Student Symposium on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution can call the institute at (202) 828-0721, or contact them at http://www.delve.com/IIMCR.html, the IIMCR web site.