Jewish educators will meet at OSU

By David Wehrle
Lantern Staff Writer

An annual worldwide conference that grew from a grassroots effort by Jewish educators to share ideas will be conducted at Ohio State, Aug. 12-16.

More than 1,500 educators, including first-time representatives from Lithuania and Russia, are expected for the 15th Annual Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education, sponsored by the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education.

"It started as a network of Jewish educators who felt they were in the trenches by themselves, so they got together to share materials," said Judy Blair, Ohio spokeswoman for the coalition.

Two main targets of discussion will be Jewish relations with other religious and ethnic groups and the evolving role of women in Judaism.

More than 600 sessions on Jewish history, heritage, teaching techniques and ideology will be featured in classrooms throughout the campus. The conference is not for Jews only, Blair said.

"Anyone concerned with Jewish education in a broad sense are encouraged to attend — rabbis, social workers, anyone who comes into contact with it," he said.

The conference has been conducted in Israel, the University of Washington in Seattle, and other places in the United States in the past, Blair said. Ohio State was chosen because of its size and its "world-famous" department of Judaic studies, she said.

The conference chairwoman is Carol Folkerth. The cost for those wanting to participate in a day's programs is $125. Blair said Aug. 14 and 15 are the best days to attend.

Volunteers who work a four-hour shift will receive a meal ticket and attend sessions free for the rest of that day, Blair said.