

Havighurst Center imagining possibilities

FOR THE OXFORD PRESS

The towers on Miami University's Harrison Hall may be converted -- at least temporarily -- to Russian-style onion domes to celebrate inaugural activities this spring surrounding the creation of the Havighurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies.

That's just one example of the high-visibility events currently under discussion at the center, which is located in Harrison. Will it really happen? It just

might -- and if it doesn't there's sure to be some other equally creative ways of calling attention to the center.

Funded by a multimillion dollar gift from the late Walter Havighurst, long-time professor of English at Miami, the center is directed by Karen Dawisha, who is the Walter Havighurst Professor in Russian and Post-Soviet Politics and a top expert on the post-Communist world.

Although the center didn't actually receive formal approval

from the Council of Academic Deans and Provost Ronald J. Crutcher until Nov. 1, efforts have been under way for months to make the new academic unit a dynamic addition to campus and community life.

A festival is being planned for the end of March around the theme of "Imagining Russia." Among the events planned: a colloquium featuring leading academics from the United States and abroad; two undergraduate sprint courses; an

inaugural lecture by Dawisha; performing and fine arts events, including art, music, dance, theater and film; and a Russian feast.

Efforts are being made by Dawisha and Maureen Nimis, program coordinator, to involve the entire Oxford and Miami community.

Havighurst's bequest specified that his gift be used to improve U.S.-Russian relations, to deep-

en understanding of Russia and the successor states and to promote scholarship of the area.

Dawisha wants to create connections that are not only multidisciplinary, but multilevel. This means engaging as many people as possible in the center--from local school children to leading intellectuals.

For more information, contact Maureen Nimis at 529-3303 or nimism@muohio.edu.