

Kremlin to Fund Student Clubs to Distract From Protests

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Moscow State University, one of the country's most prestigious universities.

The presidential administration has decided on a strategy of funding student clubs in universities as a way to distract politically inclined youth from protest rallies, Vedomosti reported Tuesday, citing a source in the Kremlin.

The clubs will be established in all universities and will receive state funding if they develop symbols, an official purpose and propose a plan of action. They will be awarded the funds by a specially created advisory council.

The council, to be elected through an online voting site, will decide on distribution of the funds from the Federal Youth Agency, which will see its financing doubled to 800 million rubles (\$24.5 million) in connection with the new plans, agency head Sergei Belokonev told the newspaper.

The Education Ministry will insist that projects be innovation- or socially oriented and that political projects will not be supported, Youth Affairs Department head Alexander Stradze said.

Political projects will be instead supported at a summer camp that will receive funding from both the state and political parties, with agreements already reached with the Liberal Democratic Party and A Just Russia. The Kremlin plans to use participants as a source of potential reserves for future regional projects.

As massive street protests become a more regular occurrence, a recent [poll](#) conducted by state-run pollster VTsIOM showed that the proportion of young protesters is increasing. At the June 12 March of a Million rally, 65 percent of participants were under 34 years old.

There are currently more than 3,000 institutions of higher education in Russia.

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