

Russian Professor Faces 6 Years Behind Bars for Skype Lectures

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Marina Zagidullina

A Chelyabinsk professor faces up to six years in prison for conducting a series of lectures via Skype, according to Russian media reports.

Marina Zagidullina, a mass communications professor at Chelyabinsk State University, is suspected of having used her position to embezzle university funds, Rossiiskaya Gazeta reported Saturday.

Zagidullina said in comments to the newspaper that the charge was based on seven missed days of work in 2011.

"During that time I read 11 lectures in a videoconference format, including via Skype," Zagidullina was cited as saying, adding that "students received the full volume of information, and more than that, they were able to pose questions [on the material]"

and receive answers. So these were just like ordinary lessons."

"Despite my absence, the lecture schedule was the same as always," Zagidullina said.

However, investigators believe the video lectures put an 83,500 ruble (\$2,400) dent in the university's budget.

The case against Zagidullina has already been closed twice due to a lack of criminal evidence, Ekho Moskvu reported.

The university administration said earlier that it had no complaints against Zagidullina since she had not acted with the intent of stealing funds, and still did all the work required of her even while absent.

Chelyabinsk's deputy prosecutor Danil Boyarinov would beg to differ. "It is impossible to be at a scientific symposium overseas and at the same time to be working in a university," Boyarinov said in quotes carried by Newsru.com. He added that Zagidullina had wasted not only university funds, but also money from the state budget.

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