

University Head Passes the Buck

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What's the president of a state university to do if she is under investigation for receiving from the school at least 800,000 rubles (\$29,000) she apparently had no right to?

Reprimand the university accountant for authorizing the expenditures, that's what.

At least that is the drama playing out at Kemerovo State University, whose president, Irina Sviridova, has been accused of collecting the money from the university in 2008 and 2009, local news web site Tayga.info [reported](#) Tuesday, citing regional prosecutors.

Part of the cash was handed to Sviridova as compensation for her work, although her employment contract makes no mention of the right to the payments, the report said.

She also spent 863,000 rubles on trips in 2009 to Moscow, where she stayed at the luxury Baltschug Kempinski and President hotels, although the costs should have been capped at 250,000 rubles, with cheaper hotels used, prosecutors [said](#) on their web site Tuesday.

District prosecutors opened a check into Sviridova's expenses in the spring and demanded that the university "fix the violations."

In response, Sviridova issued a formal reprimand to the university's head accountant for authorizing her expenses, Kemerovo regional prosecutors said, adding that their check was ongoing but no formal investigation has been opened.

Sviridova has not commented publicly on the accusations.

Kemerovo Governor Aman Tuleyev said last month that Sviridova's monthly salary stood at 500,000 rubles, compared with 25,000 rubles for a professor and 5,000 rubles for a newly hired lecturer. "Such cynicism and impudence are unheard of," he said of her expenditures, Taiga.info reported.

An open letter released later that month and signed by 10 professors from Kemerovo State University claimed that Sviridova had "high-ranking protectors," but identified none of them.

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