

Badgered U.S. Academic Loses Promised Job Amid Russian Media Maelstrom

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July 21, 2015



Second Block of Lobachevsky State University in Nizhny Novgorod

A U.S. entrepreneur who stumbled unwittingly into the spotlight earlier this month after having lost his job at a Nizhny Novgorod university following an incendiary Russian TV news broadcast, has been denied a job the university promised it had set aside for him, the Kommersant daily reported Tuesday.

Kendrick White, 51, had been serving as a vice rector at Nizhny Novgorod's Lobachevsky State University (UNN).

He was vacationing with his family in Florida when state news channel Rossia-1 aired a program portraying him as a sinister U.S. agent whose sole aim in Russia was to find talented young scientists in order to spirit them away to the West.

Two days after the broadcast aired, UNN announced White's dismissal on its website.

But amid the ensuing media circus, the university management then asked the academic to return to Russia, apologized to him and promised to appoint him director of the technology commercialization center, which he had founded years ago, The Moscow Times reported earlier this month.

Upon returning to Nizhny Novgorod, White agreed to do another interview with Rossia-1, hoping it would be a good opportunity to set the record straight, but that program turned out to be damning as well.

"I had so much hoped that this horrible episode would have moved to a reasonable ending and some sort of return to normalcy, but unfortunately it was not to be," White wrote on his Facebook page Tuesday.

The academic told Kommersant on Tuesday it was unclear whether he would be offered the opportunity to continue working with the university in some other capacity.

During an interview with The Moscow Times earlier this month he had been brimming with optimism about his future at UNN.

White said at the time he had "found a home at Lobachevsky, which is a great university and a great team. They have explained everything to me and they treated me very well throughout this very awkward situation. For that I'm very happy and I hope that the situation will work out."

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Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/07/21/badgered-us-academic-loses-promised-job-amid-russian-media-maelstrom-a48434>