Along with the resource centre and offices of SAVS, VOW and many others, the *Wits Student* offices were gutted by fire at 2:00am on Monday May 14.

The effects of the fire are devastating. All organizations lost thousands of rands worth of equipment — in particular Voice of Wits lost almost a hundred thousand rands worth of sound equipment and records.

These things, however, are replaceable. Many organizations have also lost files of written documents, recordings, financial transactions and as well as irreplaceable historical documents.

The SRC Resource Centre which contained full files of old publications, news clippings and posters specific to student activity at Wits over the last 10 years, was completely destroyed.

We do not yet know whether the fire was spontaneous, or whether it was an act of sabotage. A full-scale investigation is presently being conducted, and *Wits Student* will carry a full update in the next edition.

The incident once again throws up questions about the efficiency and effectiveness of campus security. Without wishing to resort to the measures advocated by the Progressive Society, which brought out a pamphlet on the day of the fire calling for the transformation of Wits into a maximum security prison ('We suggest that, if necessary, Wits be closed to the public, all entrances be controlled, and the identification of every person entering the premises be established') — we feel that security's function on campus must be thoroughly re-assessed.

When offices are gutted by fire or shot up, provocative slogans are painted on walls, women students are assaulted and cars stolen, and Security's major function seems to be preventing people from access to libraries or meetings something is very wrong.

It's time for the talking to stop and for concrete steps to be taken or we may arrive at Wits one morning and find the Great Hall gone.

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Old SU Building gutted by fire

At 2:00am on Monday morning a fire gutted the top floor of the old Students' Union Building. The source of the fire is unknown.

Damage estimated to be in the region of R200,000. All the offices of the clubs and societies in the old students building are destroyed.

Hardest hit is the SRC Resource Centre. Its vast collection of press clippings, magazines, books, and posters is burnt to ashes.

Many of them are irreplaceable.

The Wits Student offices, and the Voice of Wits office has been incinerated. VOW had just spent the previous weekend moving over R100,000 of equipment into the office. The equipment is totally destroyed.

The SAUJS office and many of the Christian societies' offices were also gutted. The faculty council offices were badly damaged.

The south-east corner of the building did not sustain much damage. The offices in that section include SMA (Student's Moderate Alliance) and the Commerce Students Council.

At about 2:00am, a security guard saw flames coming from the top floor of the building. The fire brigade was alerted and had the fire under control by 2:15.

The rest of the Students' Union Building is relatively undamaged. The fire was contained in the Old Students' Union Building. The SRC general office and the SRC president's office remained undamaged, as did all the other club and damaged, as did all the other clubs and societies offices in the new Students' Union Building.

It appeared that only the top floor and the roof of the building were damaged. The canteens or the ground and first floors were undamaged.

Glass, debris, printed matter and office equipment were lying all over the place. Windows seemed to have been blown outwards by what appears to be an explosion. It is not known how the fire was started.

The Security Police in camouflage uniform were on the scene early yesterday morning. Wits Security is also investigating. Nobody has yet claimed responsibility.
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