Threat Assessment and Management in Universities – A Review of the last 7 years

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ETH Zürich - International University

- > 18'000 students / in total 29'000 people
- Founded 1855
- Staff members from 80 nations
- > 65% of professors from abroad

Two main Locations in Zürich
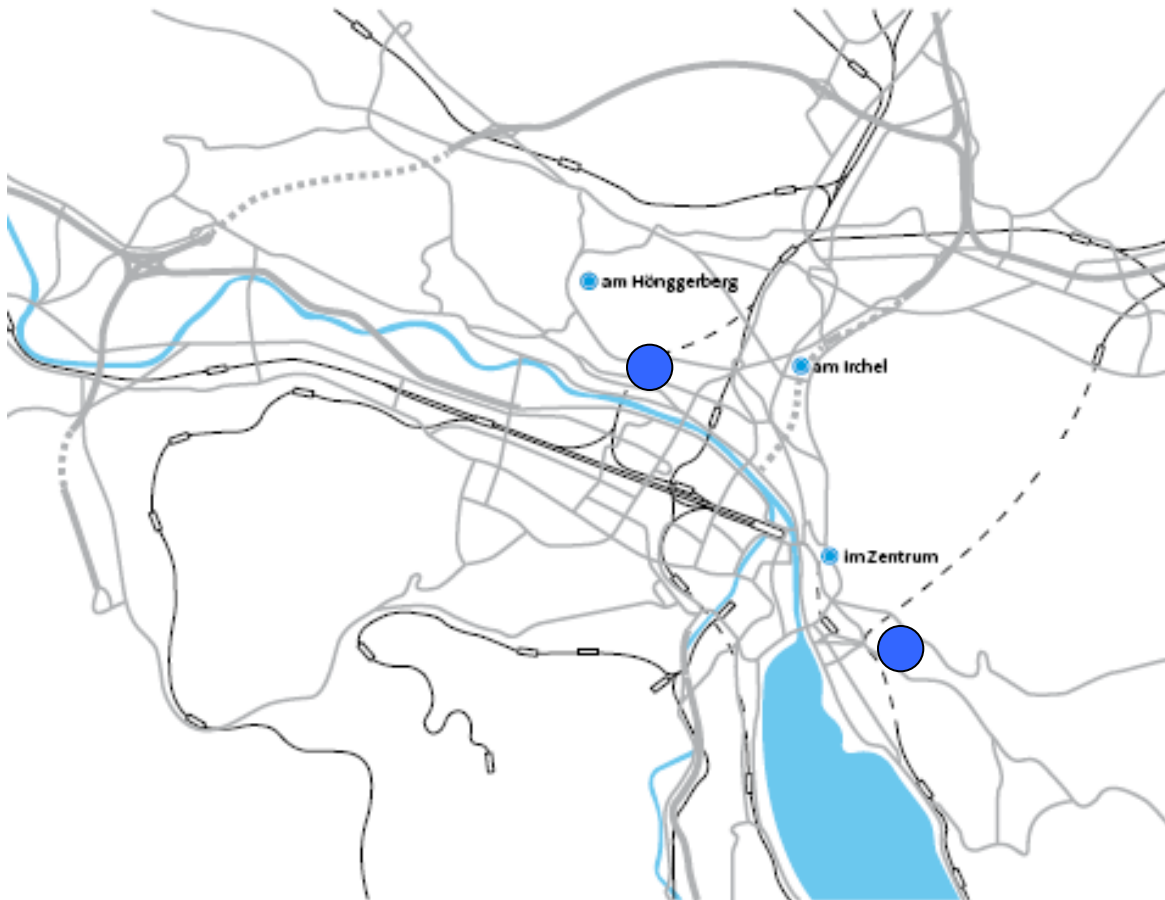
Zürich Hönggerberg

Zürich Centre

> 240 Buildings
„Open Door" Policy

How Everything Started

- In 2007 there was little discussion on violence at universities and violence prevention in Europe.

- After the school shooting at Virginia Tech in 2007 the ETH Zürich started thinking about the possibility of violence on the ETH campus.

- A small team gathered information about school shootings and summarised learnings from those incidents.

- Interesting fact: at the time, the ETH Zürich had a case where a former staff member was regularly threatening faculty members. This had been going on for several years. Internal units – especially the Legal Dept. as well as the SSHE Unit - were trying to help, but there was no clear understanding of how to proceed.

The Case was the Starting Point

- End of 2007: the case was passed to the SSHE Unit.

- SSHE Unit contacted specialists in the field of TA /TM.

- It was soon clear that the ETH Zürich needed to develop and implement a TA and TM program.

- A first meeting with Heads of relevant Units (HR, Legal, Rectorate, CC, SSHE) as well as the psychologists of the Staff Development Unit was organized.

- The key elements of a TA and TM program were presented by the external specialists, triggering an interesting discussion (mandate, how can we recognize, doubts about effectiveness…etc.)

- This was the start of our TM Team, which today is taken for granted.
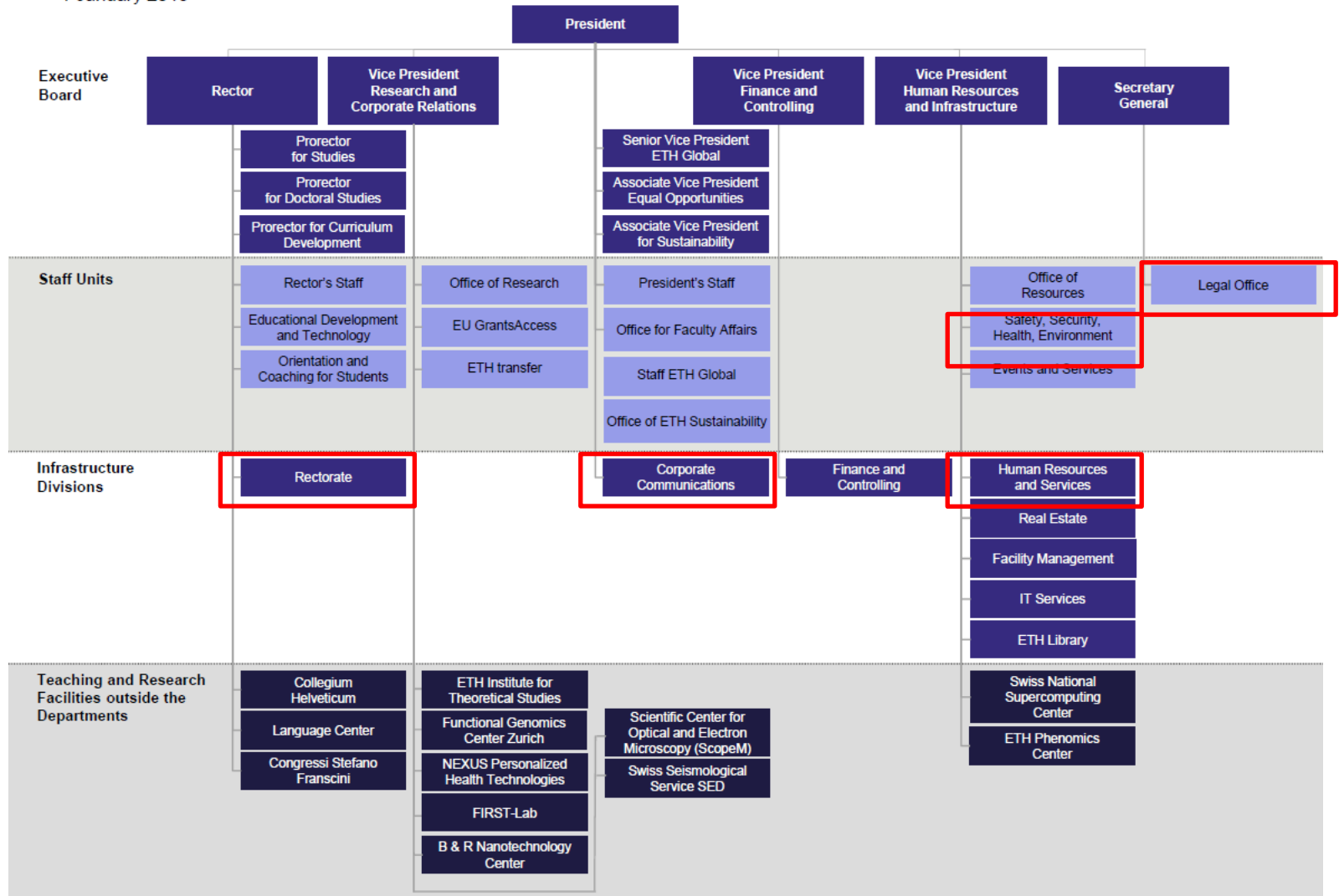
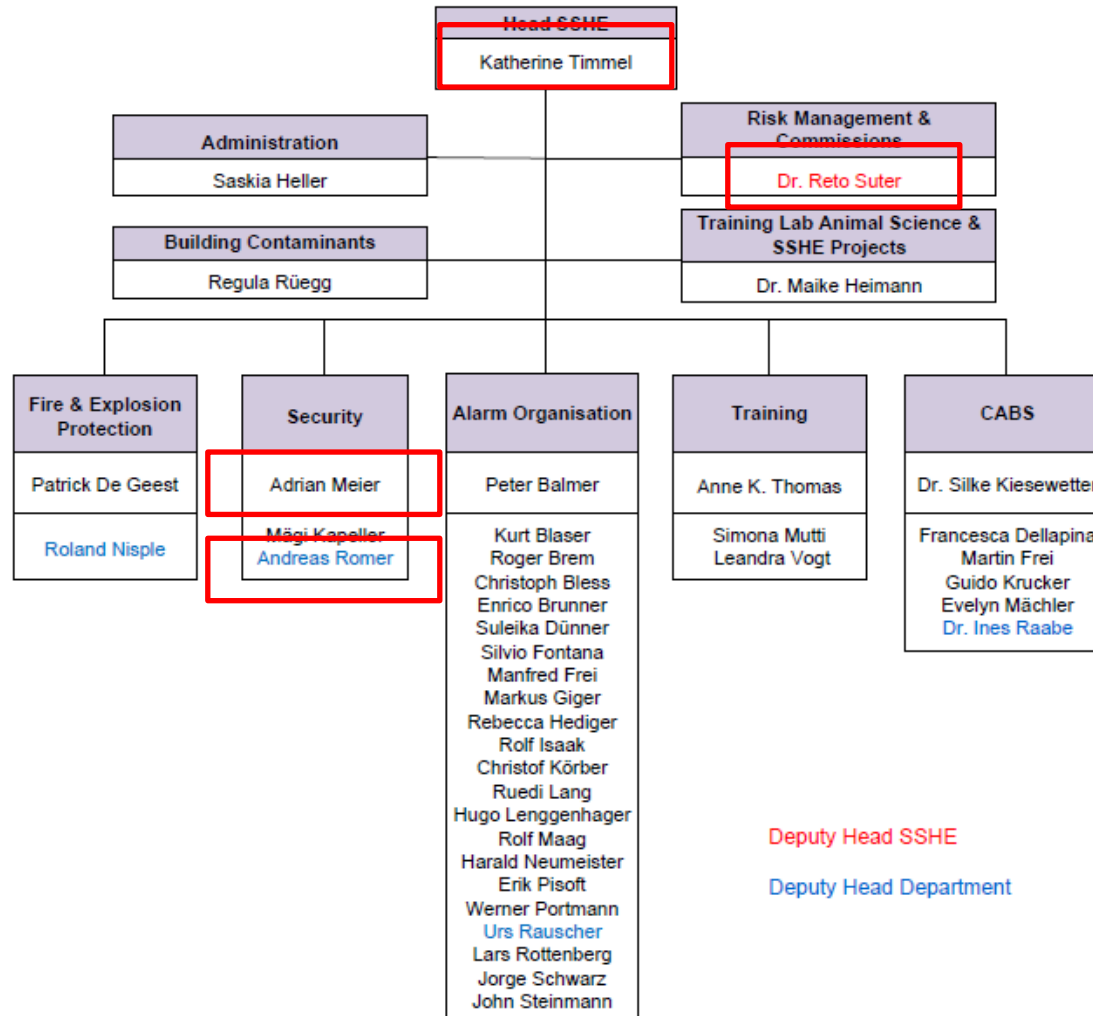# ETH Zürich
Threat Assessment and Management Team

Organisation Chart ETH Zurich

Executive Board, Administration, Teaching and Research Facilities outside the Departments
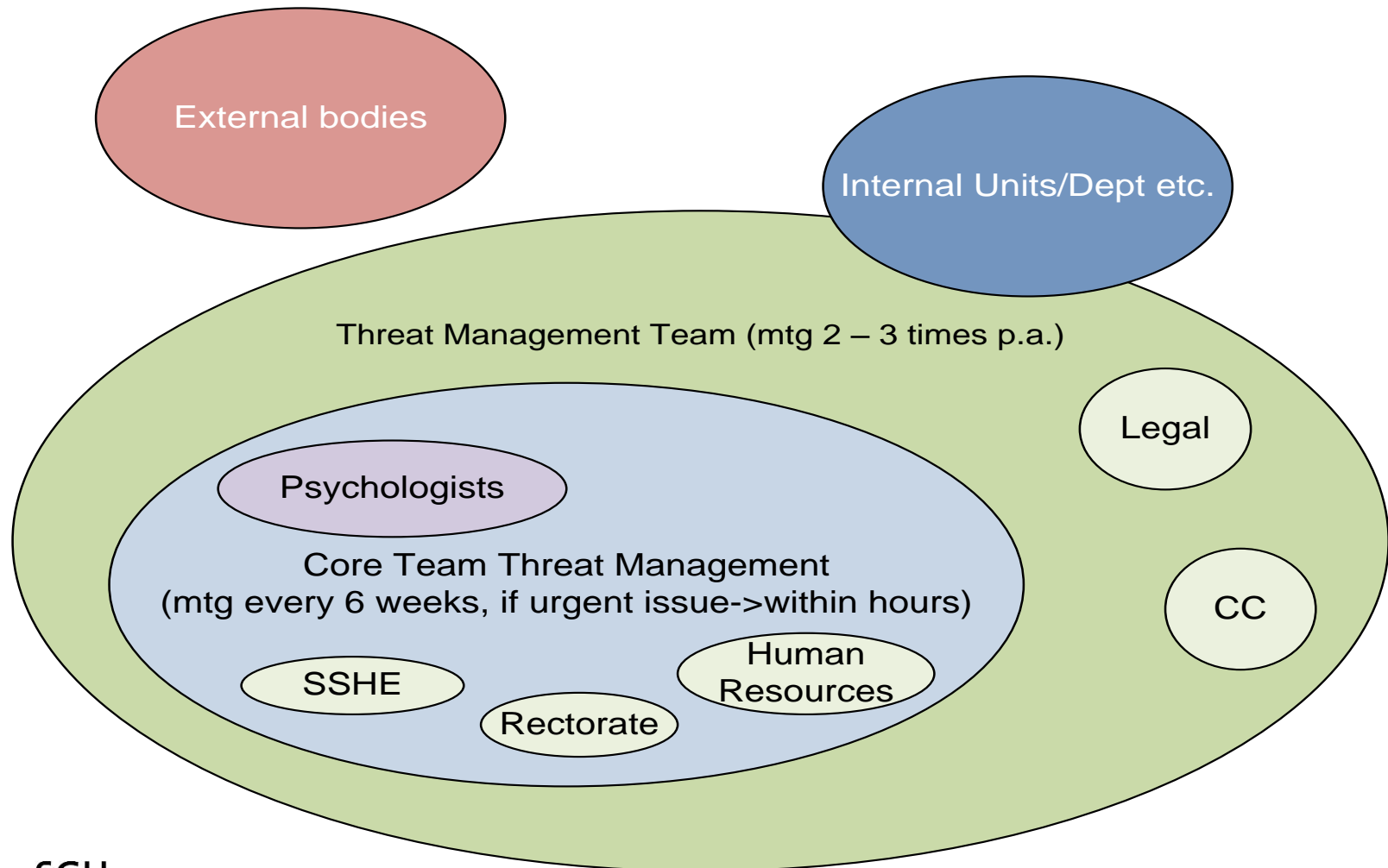
1 January 2015

Safety, Security, Health and Environment (SSHE)

Head SSHE
Katherine Timmel

Administration
Saskia Heller

Building Contaminants
Regula Rüegg

Risk Management & Commissions
Dr. Reto Suter

Training Lab Animal Science & SSHE Projects
Dr. Maike Heimann

Fire & Explosion Protection	Security	Alarm Organisation	Training	CABS
Patrick De Geest	Adrian Meier	Peter Balmer	Anne K. Thomas	Dr. Silke Kiesewetter
Roland Nisple	Mägi Kapeller Andreas Romer	Kurt Blaser Roger Brem Christoph Bless Enrico Brunner Suleika Dünner Silvio Fontana Manfred Frei Markus Giger Rebecca Hediger Rolf Isaak Christof Körber Ruedi Lang Hugo Lenggenhager Rolf Maag Harald Neumeister Erik Pisoft Werner Portmann Urs Rauscher Lars Rottenberg Jorge Schwarz John Steinmann	Simona Mutti Leandra Vogt	Francesca Dellapina Martin Frei Guido Krucker Evelyn Mächler Dr. Ines Raabe

Deputy Head SSHE

Deputy Head Department

1. März 2015

Threat Assessment and Management – Team / Meetings

External bodies

Internal Units/Dept etc.

Threat Management Team (mtg 2 – 3 times p.a.)

Legal

Psychologists

Core Team Threat Management
(mtg every 6 weeks, if urgent issue->within hours)

CC

SSHE

Rectorate

Human Resources

Role and Tasks of the ETH Threat Management Team

- Receives notification of an incident. Assesses if the case should be handled by the Team or by HR.

- Reviews the status of current cases and defines case manager (ONE person).

- Performs/ Reviews workplace risk assessments and defines the level of risks for each actual case.

- Discusses and decides on necessary actions: Disciplinary actions; security measures; professional assessment; legal guidance; involvement of police; interventions for victims; Q&A for media; ban from the premises etc.

- Informs Management on a regular basis.

- Owner of the Process is the SSHE Unit.

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TA and TM - Some basic Requirements and Opportunities

- Get a common understanding on the purpose and the advantages of Threat Management / regular training.

- The primary focus should be on violence prevention, but not solely (Crisis Management)

- Implementing a threat management process in an organization offers the opportunity to identify, assess and manage problematic individuals, situations and groups.

- The organization itself has to take responsibility for violence / risk prevention.

- Establish/document the process.

- Define roles and responsibilities of the different units and divisions.

Hurdles in an University Environment

- Decentralised structure
- High turn over of students/Doctoral students /professors (admin staff +/- stable)
- High degree of freedom and superiority
- Difficulty to accept responsibility and strict guidelines -> tendency to delegate responsibility to the SSHE Unit , but this may be an advantage in TA and TM as we get then the information and people do not act on their own.

Case Manager

- Responsible Case Manager is communicated to all involved parties as well as victims.
- All communication (to internal / external parties) is handled by <u>the</u> case manager.
- Reviews current information and gains additional information from internal and external sources. Manages and updates documentation as well as Case Chronology.
- Performs workplace risk assessment in the Core Team and defines level of risks.
- Provides advice and necessary counselling services to victims; keeps line of communication open to all involved.
- Proposes necessary actions to Threat Management Team.

Spread the Word / Inform Members of ETH

- Make sure that all (relevant) persons on the campus are aware of the existence of the TM Team.

- Make sure that the purpose and role of the TM Team is correctly understood ("no black lists")

- Explain the purpose of the Team as well as how potential threats can be identified already at an early stage.

- Inform members of the Internal Services (Facility Management, House-keeping, Welcome Desk etc.) as they are at the front line and can support.

ETH Zürich
Types of Cases

Variety of Cases

Stalking Cases

- Offenders call, write (messaging, social medias, letters), appear at work or at home.
- Victims need assistance (Note: Stalking is not a crime in Switzerland).

Threatening Cases

- The offender threatens in writing/verbally (student→ Professor/ former employee → colleagues or supervisors).
- The victim(s)/involved person(s) need assistance (show border line/ disciplinary actions etc.).
- Paranoid/maniac: involved persons develop fear and need assistance in dealing with this type of offender. Problem is that offender does not realize he/she would need mental help/medication.

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The Offender

Not a stranger
The victims and/or involved person know the offender in most of the cases.

Work Situation
The offenders were (are) either employees or students at ETH Zürich.

Fixation
In most cases the offenders were for quite some time at ETH Zürich; things happened which they regard as an injustice (failed exam, no prolongation of contract etc.). They develop a strong fixation to members of ETH and the location itself.

Examples of Cases in the last 7 Years – 1

Student fails in the exam/study

- Starts threatening or bothering members of ETH who are in his/her view responsible for his failure (members of the Rector's team).
- Actions: Meetings with involved persons, discuss options.
  Issue a ban of the premises.
- Fell into depression; possibly suicidal.
- Results?

Employee has problems with circumstances at work

- Bothers/threatens supervisor as well as other team members. Perceived responsible for the problems are members of the HR Team
  - Meetings with involved persons and institutions., discuss options
  - Police possibly involved due to threat.
  - Dismissal from the job ➔ ban of entering ETH-buildings.
- Fell into depression; possibly suicidal.
- Results?

Examples of Cases in the last 7 Years – 2

Paranoid/maniac person

- Student/employee
- Shows up at various internal Units
    - Asks for help, claims that different people steal her intellectual property.
    - Claims that her IT account has been corrupted
    - Very demanding, annoying for staff involved
- ETH must help and stop this
    - Defines the IT service unit as incompetent as well as SSHE Head
- writes 'special' letters
    - wants to take over the whole ETH
    - wants to have her research results published
    - wants to take the place of the President.
- Ban of the prsmises was issued
- Results?

Difficult Cases

Threatening / Resource Intensive Case
Ex-employee threatened different members of faculty as well as of central administration, some of them were involved in the "injustice" that happened 14 years ago. Very rarely showing up on Campus.
Case still ongoing.

Resource Intensive Case
A maniac ex-student bothers/threatens members of faculty and other persons. Very often showing up on campus.
Case still ongoing.

Most frightening case
Employee with delusions of conspiracy theories threatens others. He wrote very concerning e-mails, institute members preferred to work from home. Former US Army member; bears different DAN (honours) in martial arts.
Case is under observation, in cooperation with the police.

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Success in Case Management

Communication
All cases are discussed in the TM-Team. Regular Meetings take place. The case manager is accessible and can be reached easily. If the cases affect the nearby institutions (University Hospital/University Zürich) Information is exchanged.

Trust
The case manager is involved and takes care of the potential victim(s). The victim has a clear communication line to the case manager.

Cooperation with the police
Whenever necessary, we contact the police TM-Team (City Police or State Police)
The case is discussed and necessary measures implemented.
In a case, during a difficult discussion, the SWAT-Team of state police was located directly in front of the building.

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Last Gap – in case of…….

- Implementation of an Information and Alerting Tool (IAT) as well as mechanical door locks (to barricade).

- The IAT tool will reach members of the ETH Zürich via SMS, mobile phone call, landline phone call, e-Mail, web page etc.

- The tool will alert members of the ETH Zürich in case of an evacuation (fire/explosion/bomb threat) as well as in case of school shooting and in order to barricade oneself.

- Currently the project for the introduction of the IAT is in the testing phase/review of performance.

- The project exchange of door key locks started.

Conclusion

- The interest for Threat Assessment and Threat Management is present. Today our work is taken for granted and daily business. The School board supports our work.
- The acceptance grows from year to year.
- Information about TA and TM: This cannot be done often enough…we fight selective forgetfulness, every day.
- Cultivate the internal and external Network, always.
- In long lasting cases → change case manager from time to time (avoid fixation).
- Continuous training in TA/TM is essential or the team.
- Looking back: Would we do something differently….?

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