Best Business Tech Pivot

Covid-19 Response
CODiE Award Submission

Powered by a passionate team of data analysts, behavioral scientists, technologists, and educators, Degree Analytics began paving its way as a behavioral analytics company focused in the higher education sector. We began by bringing to market a frictionless platform, which we labeled Engauge, that focuses on collecting, analyzing, and reporting behavioral observations that are linked to success and satisfaction. Degree Analytics was awarded a patent for this innovative solution. Our single value proposition was to better understand how, when and where students were engaging with each other, with faculty, and with campus resources and then apply a predictive analytics model on these data to identify early indicators for both students on track to matriculate and those at risk of dropping out. The data from Degree Analytics is also instrumental in identifying changes in student patterns and trends, so leadership is able to identify leading indicators of academic disengagement.

At the beginning of March 2020, Degree Analytics began to implement four key pivots to provide additional support to institutions as they were forced to implement alternative engagement models by the CoVid-19 Pandemic. By retooling our Engauge Platform to support real time access, analysis and reporting of behavioral data on campus (versus daily batch processing), colleges and universities were better positioned to understand and manage student behaviors on a minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day basis. This enabled campus leaders to better support all students, faculty, and staff and not let anyone fall through the cracks in this tumultuous time. Institutions were positioned with real time data to manage their safety and security measures, physical distancing guidelines, health care, and other essential support services to the entire campus community.

DegreeAnalytics

"As campus reopens this fall, using this data will help us make strategic decisions around our community's health and safety. Regardless of what model we use, there will still be some level of student and faculty presence on campus that we need to ensure we are doing our part to keep them safe and serve them as best we can. Partnering with Degree Analytics enables us to track where people gather, provide alerts when we are at capacity, and make informed decisions regarding facility management. We are eager to continue this partnership."

Steve DiFillipo | Millersville University

Success Begins with Safety and Security

Best Business Tech Pivot
Covid-19 Response

DegreeAnalytics

PIVOT ONE: Reporting Campus Presence

By mid-March 2020, the impact of CoVid-19 on our education system was becoming a reality. Colleges and universities were forced to make the serious decision to send students away from campus and move to remote instruction. Degree Analytics recognized that not all students would be able to vacate campus. There were some that were unable to relocate due to a variety of individual circumstances. Quickly reaching out to our college and university partners, bespoke campus monitoring plans were created to quickly identify who, when and where individuals were still utilizing campus facilities and resources. As campus activities shifted into the Summer and Fall 2020 semesters, their data needs shifted as well. The new data included the number of students and the time spent on campus, and also began to value a real time view of facilities usage. It became important for campus leaders to understand which buildings were still being used - and how, to determine physical distancing compliance, HVAC requirements, cleaning schedules, etc. Degree Analytics helped by reporting these data through a secure real time dashboard.

PIVOT TWO: Supporting the Return to Campus with Contact Tracing and Social Density Modules

Heading into Summer and Fall of 2020, campuses implemented a wide variety of reenagement models. Degree Analytics was there too, continuing to provide the valuable data to which campus leaders had grown accustomed. Now, the data need was a step deeper – campus leaders were required to understand, "If someone tests positive on my campus, how will I know who they have been near? Where they have been?". Once again, the Degree Analytics team took action – creating new algorithms to quickly identify and report anyone with whom a CoVid-19 positive person had been in close physical contact and in what locations those contacts occurred. These additions allowed leaders to take immediate action following a positive Covid test within their community. As an additional proactive measure, we also developed and deployed a heat map module informing campus leaders as to where and when groups were gathering in real time. Through new email and SMS messaging, campus leaders received notifications when locations were reaching or nearing capacity allowing them to take corrective action to promote safety and security. These new modules create an additional layer to the institutional facilities data and reporting.

"Initially, we partnered with Degree Analytics to utilize their contact tracing and social distancing tools, which were pivotal in helping Eureka mitigate the spread of Covid-19. Now we are exploring Degree Analytics' Engauge platform to provide additional views into student engagement to help us continue to enhance student life on campus."

Ann Fulop
Eureka College

Hear from Degree Analytics CEO/Inventor, Aaron Benz, on how Degree Analytics is pivoting its data solutions and machine learning technology to address COVID-19 safety and security measures.
https://youtu.be/cl5ntiIjKh4

Best Business Tech Pivot
Covid-19 Response

DegreeAnalytics

> *"Degree Analytics gave us the ability to make decisions in real time. They helped form and continue to help refine our Pandemic Response Program for all of our campuses, which greatly impacted our ability to remain open."*

William Lidwell
Avenues: The World School

PIVOT THREE: Supporting K-12 Schools

Initially focusing on Higher Ed, during the pandemic Degree Analytics understood that K-12 institutions were also struggling with many of the same challenges. To that end, Degree Analytics was privileged to partner with a Avenues: The World School as our first K-12 client. Avenues: The World School operates under the concept of one school with many campuses. These campuses are traditionally high-density facilities in high-density cities. Unlike our Higher Education clients, where Degree Analytics relies on student WiFi connected devices (Smart phones, tablets, laptops, etc.) for raw data collection, K-12 environments required a different approach since younger students might not have consistent access to their own personal WiFi enable device while in the school environment. To address this reality we partnered with Cisco Meraki and Kontakt.io to deploy a bluetooth enabled ID card system for all faculty, students, staff, and parents at each campus. This partnership not only enabled the school(s) to remain open, while others around them were forced to return to online coursework, Avenues campuses actually increased enrollment during the Fall 2020 semester because of their more robust contact tracing and social density management.

PIVOT FOUR (in progress): Supporting Hybrid Learning Environments

We don't see CoVid-19 as a temporary impact on education. Our experience with virtual courses and online learning are here to stay, and Degree Analytics is working to add modules for both K-12 and Higher Education institutions to quickly derive and deliver insights and leading indicators from hybrid and flexible instructional models. In the Fall 2021 semester we will add real time data streams from virtual classrooms (Zoom, WebEx, etc.) and well as LMS participation data to our platform.

Media Mentions:

How Social Distancing Tech Is Helping Higher Education Reopen (edtechmagazine.com)

Pivoting and scaling with AWS: Three EdTechs share their journey to support education | AWS Public Sector Blog (amazon.com)

How Colleges Are Creating Safe & Positive Campus Experiences (edtechmagazine.com)