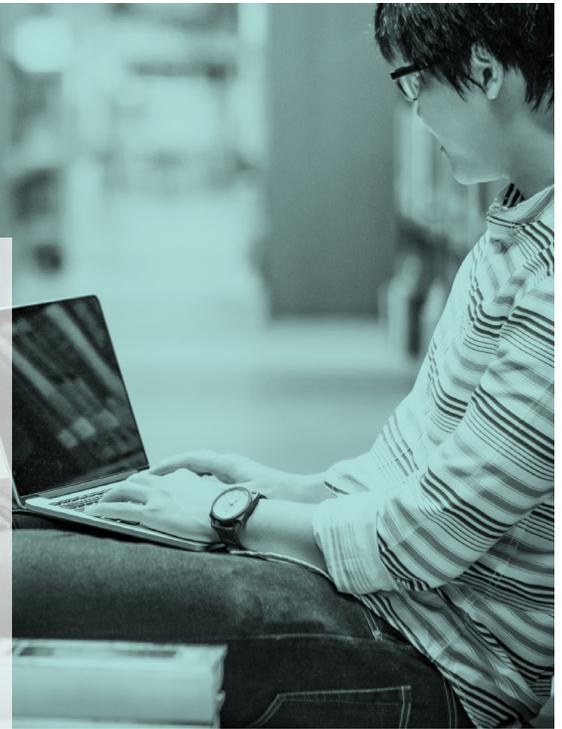# THE THRILL OF SOLVING IN HIGHER ED

ALTERYX + HONG KONG POLYU

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

(HK PolyU) started as a traditional polytechnic institution emphasizing vocational training and practical skills. Today, the university provides a much wider range of programs across professional education, academics, and applied research to roughly 29,000 students from Hong Kong and around the world. Senior Institutional Research Analyst Anson Wun is part of a team in the Institutional Research and Planning Office (IRPO) that consolidates large volumes of data from various internal and external sources and provides analytics to better understand how the university is performing.

Business Challenges

HK PolyU has evolved to a full university, but changing its culture and administrative processes has presented a number of challenges.

Anson's team gathers data from academic departments and central administrative units, the government, and other external sources. He estimates that 90 percent of the data files he receives from internal departments are Excel-based. And the data they receive from external sources are only downloadable in CSV and Excel formats. "Our team

> HK PolyU uses Alteryx to consolidate, share and analyze data for a smarter university.

has traditionally relied on Excel, or Microsoft Access for our more technical staff. Beyond that, we've had to rely on our centralized IT unit for more advanced data requests. But that was proving to be a lengthy and highly complicated process to get the information we needed."

DEEPER INSIGHTS

Using predictive analytics with Alteryx, HK PolyU has started doing student projections and now has measures to assess how likely students are to succeed/fail.

HOURS VS. WEEKS

Using Alteryx, Anson's time to create balanced scorecards for individual departments went from two weeks to a few hours.

REPEATABLE WORKFLOW AND
SELF-SERVICE ANALYTICS

Anson can make adjustments to the workflow easily, without having to redo the whole process. He can share it so that management can do any analyses they might want to do.

Anson's first major task in the IRPO was to create a balanced scorecard for nearly 30 academic departments, specifically to set KPIs for senior management to evaluate departmental performance.

Anson estimates that the process to get the data they needed from individual departments and to run "first cut" reports was taking about two weeks, which meant his team could only manage the process on a quarterly basis. And if anyone had follow-up questions or wanted to modify variables to look at data from other angles, the team had to go back to original data sources, re-slice the data, and repeat the entire process.

Why Alteryx?

Anson needed a robust self-service data analytics solution that wasn't reliant on highly technical and error-prone configurations. He also wanted an intuitive UI and on-demand online training and support resources. Additionally, he needed the ability to share work and collaborate with colleagues in real time. Anson learned about Alteryx through Velocity Business Solutions, an Alteryx partner also based in Hong Kong.

Solution

Velocity recommended Alteryx to not only speed up data preparation and blending, but for the more advanced capabilities such as predictive analytics. Anson's team initially implemented Alteryx Designer to create workflows to blend and manipulate data, and to create data sets for use in visualization tools. He now also employs the built-in predictive capabilities to perform statistical analyses on the student lifecycle.

Alteryx gives Anson's team a robust and versatile platform to perform analytics in a timely and flexible manner, and make decisions based on data.