

# Data -Driven Analysis of College Career Services : How Kenyon Can Improve Student Success

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IPHS 484 Senior Seminar (Spring 2023) Prof Elkins and Chun, Kenyon College



## Abstract

In today's competitive job market, career services have become an essential component of higher education, providing students with the necessary resources and guidance to succeed in their chosen fields. This project explores the potential for enhancing career services at Kenyon College by comparing its offerings with those of similar small liberal arts colleges. The study involves a comprehensive analysis of career services, a student satisfaction survey design, and a ranked actionable recommendations based on the findings. The goal is to identify areas for improvement and suggest strategies that can contribute to the enhancement of Kenyon College's career services department.

## Introduction

The transition from college to the professional world can be a daunting process for many students. As they prepare to embark on their career paths, they rely on the support and guidance provided by their institution's career services department. These departments play a critical role in not only helping students identify their strengths and interests, but also in connecting them with resources, opportunities, and networks that can set them up for success in their chosen fields. Recognizing the importance of effective career services, Kenyon College is committed to providing its students with the resources and support they need to excel in their professional lives. To ensure that these services meet the evolving needs of the student body, it is crucial to regularly evaluate their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. This project seeks to contribute to this ongoing effort by conducting a comprehensive assessment of Kenyon College's career services offerings. We begin by comparing the college's services with those of other small liberal arts colleges to understand how Kenyon's offerings align with industry standards and best practices. We then design a student satisfaction survey to gather valuable feedback from the very individuals who stand to benefit the most from these services—Kenyon's students. Finally, we present hypothetical recommendations based on our findings, providing actionable insights that can inform future improvements to the college's career services department. By taking a multifaceted approach that combines comparative analysis, survey design, and hypothetical recommendations, this project aims to provide a roadmap for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of career services at Kenyon College. In doing so, we hope to contribute to the ongoing efforts to ensure that Kenyon's students are well-prepared and equipped to thrive in their professional lives after graduation.

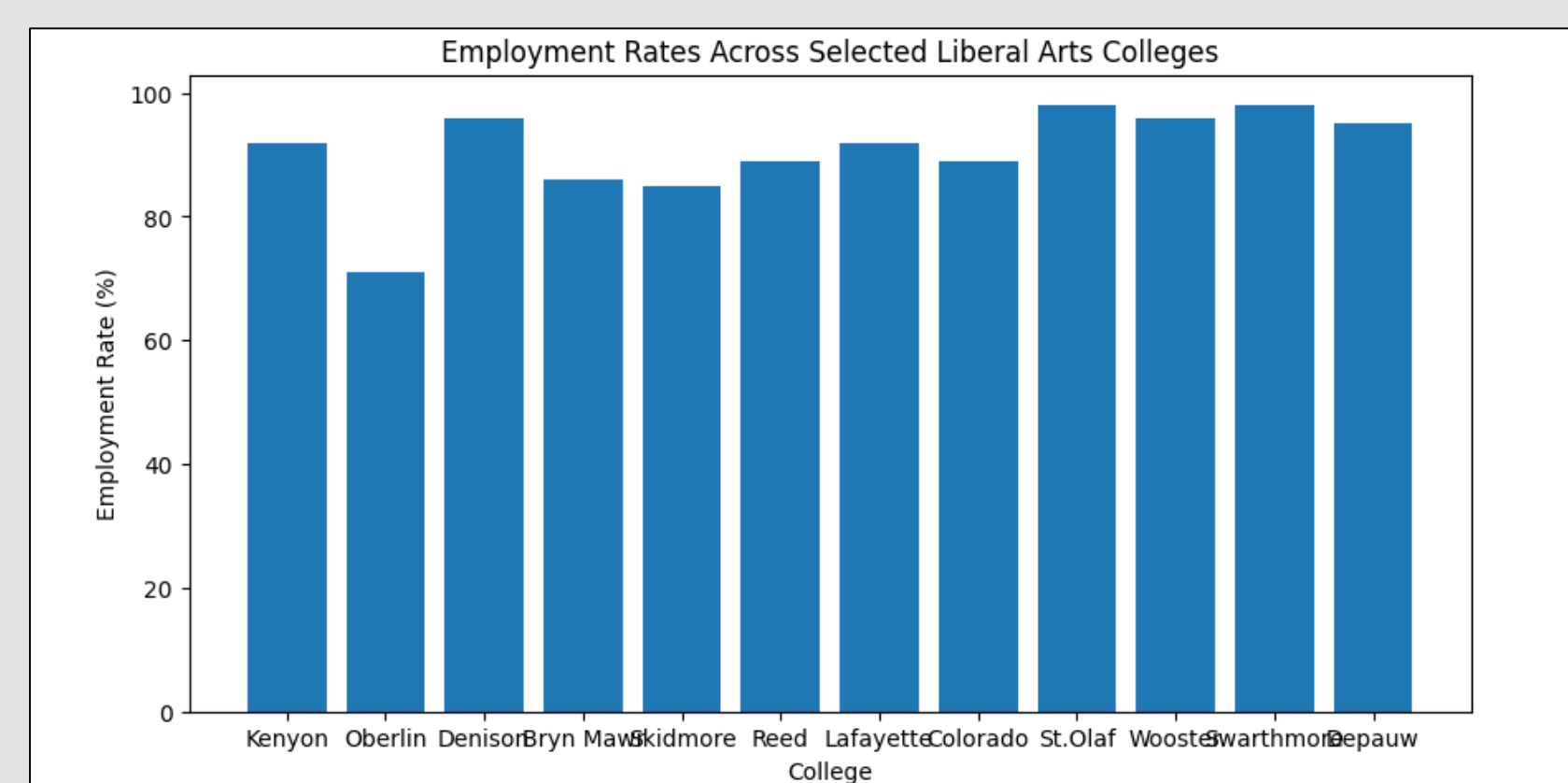


Fig.1: Bar chart of employment rate across comparable small LAC's

## Methodology

To carry out a thorough evaluation of Kenyon College's career services and identify areas for improvement, we employed a systematic methodology that encompasses three key components: comparative analysis, survey design, and hypothetical recommendations.

### 1) Comparative Analysis:

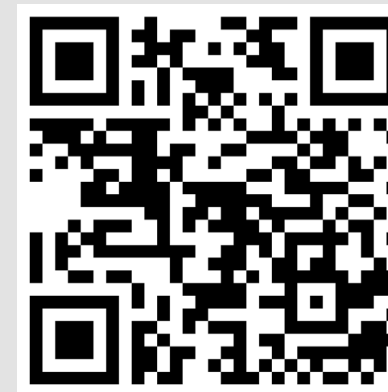
The first step of our methodology involved conducting a comprehensive comparison of Kenyon College's career services with those of other similar small liberal arts colleges. These institutions were carefully selected based on their similarity in size, location, and academic offerings to ensure a fair and meaningful comparison. We collected data on various aspects of

## Methodology (contd.)

each college's career services department, such as: Types of services offered (e.g., resume reviews, workshops, networking events, etc.) Resources available (e.g., online platforms, career center facilities, etc.), Staff support (e.g., career counselors, alumni connections, etc.) Success rates (e.g., employment statistics, graduate school acceptances, etc.)

By comparing these criteria across the selected colleges, we were able to identify trends, strengths, and weaknesses in Kenyon College's career services offerings.

### 2) Student Satisfaction Survey: (Scan to see survey)



To gather first-hand feedback from students on their experiences with Kenyon College's career services, we designed a student satisfaction survey. This survey was developed to measure the effectiveness of the services offered, the resources available, the staff support provided, and the overall success rates of students who utilized the services. Questions were crafted to capture a range of perspectives, with respondents rating their level of agreement with various statements on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

### 2.1) Survey Design

#### i) Sampling Method

Used stratified random sampling to ensure representation of different student groups (e.g., class year, major, gender, ethnicity) in proportion to their presence in the overall student population.

#### ii) Questionnaire Design

Developed clear, concise, and unbiased questions. Used a mix of question types, including multiple choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions. Organized questions into sections for easier navigation and to minimize respondent fatigue.

#### iii) Sections and Question Types

##### a) Demographic Information:

Collect data on class year, major, gender, and ethnicity.

##### Overall Satisfaction

Used Likert scale questions to gauge students' overall satisfaction with career services.

##### b) Service -Specific Satisfaction:

Used Likert scale questions to measure satisfaction with individual services, such as resume reviews, mock interviews, job search assistance, workshops, and networking events.

##### c) Effectiveness of Services:

Used Likert scale questions to assess the perceived effectiveness of various career services in helping students achieve their professional goals.

##### d) Areas for Improvement:

Used multiple choice and ranking questions to identify areas where students believe career services could be improved and to prioritize these areas based on student preferences.

##### e) Open -Ended Feedback:

Included open-ended questions to allow students to provide additional feedback, suggestions, or insights.

### 2.2) Survey Administration

Utilize a secure survey platform and administer the survey online for maximum accessibility. Encourage participation through incentives and reminders within a designated timeframe.

### 3) Hypothetical Recommendations:

Based on the insights gained from the comparative analysis and the survey design, we formulated a set of hypothetical recommendations aimed at addressing the identified weaknesses and enhancing Kenyon College's career services offerings. These recommendations were developed with the intent of providing actionable and feasible solutions that could be implemented by the college to improve the overall quality and effectiveness of its career services department.

By employing this multifaceted methodology, we aimed to generate a comprehensive understanding of Kenyon College's career services offerings, identify areas for improvement, and provide actionable insights to inform future enhancements

## Results

The bar chart comparing the Employment in terms of job and graduate school placement for the the comparable Small Liberal Arts colleges reveals some interesting trends. One of our Ohio 5 college Denison University consistently demonstrates higher success rates in both categories compared to the rest of the peers in the group. Swarthmore College demonstrates similar capability. This suggests that Denison and Swarthmore College's career services are particularly effective in helping students secure jobs and gain acceptance into graduate programs. Meanwhile, Kenyon, Colorado, Wooster, and Reed College exhibit room for improvement, with Oberlin and Skidmore College slightly trailing behind the other colleges in terms of overall employment rates.

Now we take a deeper dive into Kenyon College's own career services that are offered to students (both current and Alumni's).

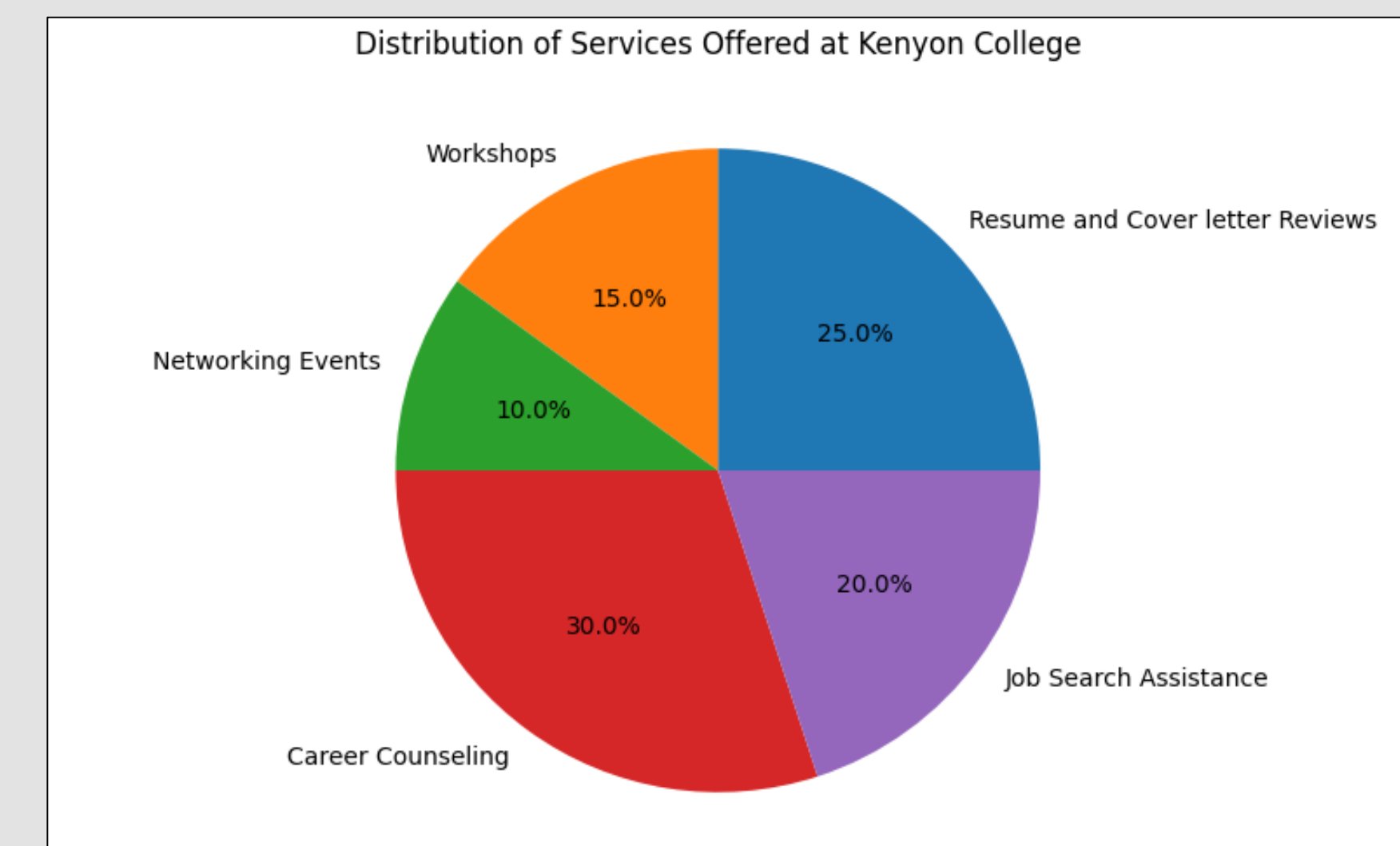


Fig.2: Pie chart of the distribution of Career Services offered at Kenyon

The key words in the pie chart take into similar components e.g., Job search assistance include services like Handshake, Interstride, LinkedIn. Career Counseling involves one to one career consultation, Professional extension projects, Job shadow opportunities.

The resources are helpful components in each services offered by the college's career development department. We look here to find wide varieties of resources and if any relationship can be tied back to our bar

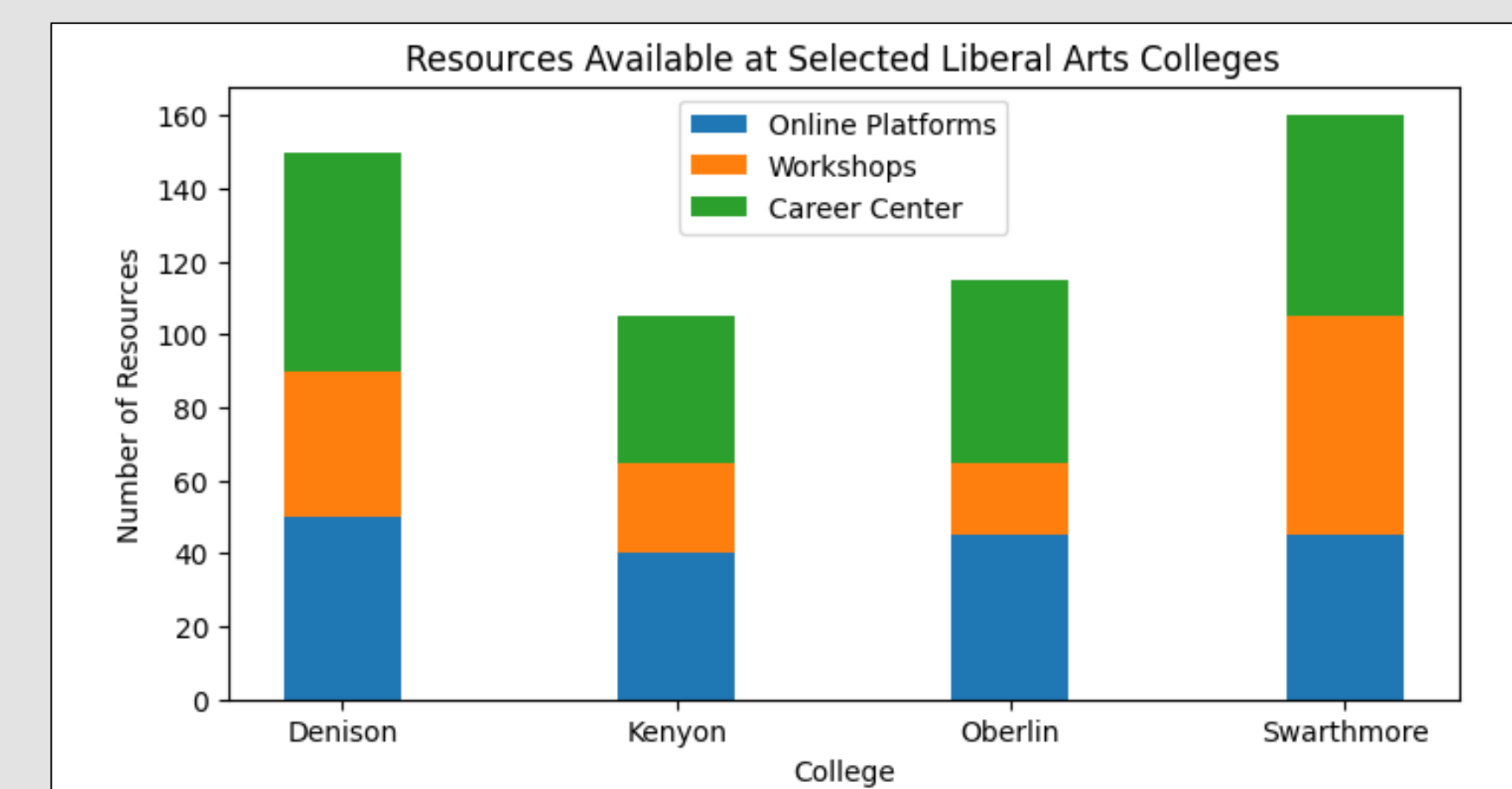


Fig.3: Stacked bar chart of the resources available at select LAC's

chart from figure 1. We can see that Denison And Swarthmore's resources more diverse than that of Kenyon and Oberlin. With an interactive and eventful calendar of Workshops and networking events, Denison and Swarthmore take a higher point in these two resource categories. Although, Online Platforms such as Handshake, LinkedIn learning are common resources found in these colleges. Oberlin College had career community which was common with Denison and Swarthmore but not with Kenyon. A pattern can be seen emerging now.

We move on to human resources now. The chart below displaying staff support and alumni involvement at each college paints a clear picture of the disparities in these crucial aspects of career services. Strengthening career services staff and alumni relation seems to be indicative of success rates among students.

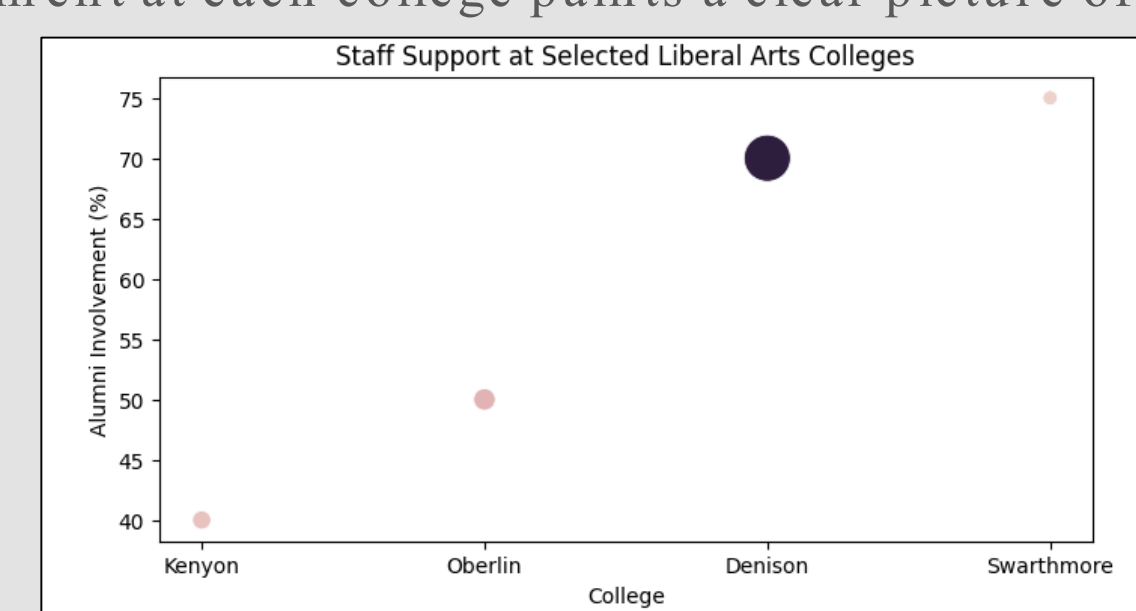


Fig.4: Bubble chart involving staff support and alumni engagement

## Results (contd.)

After running these comparative analyses, I decided to go forward with my survey. But upon discussing with the Staff at Career Development Office and my professors who had done a similar study involving human subjects, I realized that I needed permission from Institutional Review Board (IRB). I did not have enough time to do that as permission from IRB takes months and I needed to wrap up my study before semester completion. So, I ran a few what-if simulations based on the data I had when I was making the survey while talking to 50+ people.

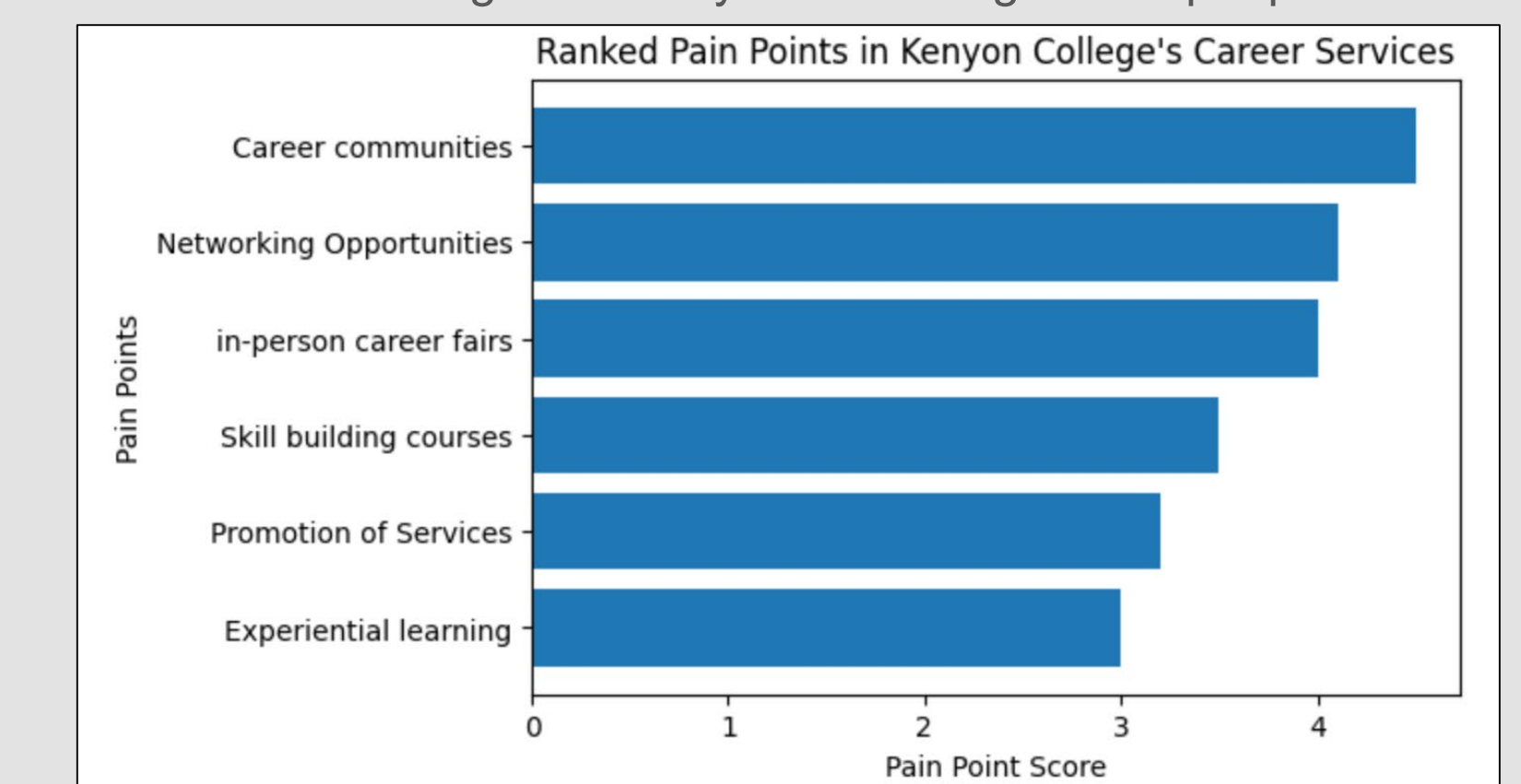


Fig.5: Horizontal Bar chart ranking pain points in Kenyon's Career services

The hypothetical report, generated from the comparative analysis and survey design, identifies and ranks the most pressing concerns in Kenyon College's career services which can be seen in a ranked order from the figure above.

The full report can be found here.



## Conclusion & future steps

Based on our findings above and addressing the pain points from our report, we provide hypothetical recommendations to mitigate our weaknesses and enhance our career services at Kenyon.

- Improve networking opportunities:** Foster stronger alumni connections, coordinate more networking events, and collaborate with local businesses. (e.g., partnering with companies, hosting guest speakers)
- Enhance promotion of services:** Raise awareness and accessibility of the CDO's services through social media, email campaigns, and on-campus advertising. (e.g., targeted email campaigns, engaging social media posts)
- Increase in-person career fairs:** Organize more on-campus career fairs to connect students with potential employers and internship opportunities.
- Develop skill-building courses:** Offer workshops and courses focused on enhancing students' professional skills, such as communication, project management, and leadership.
- Bridge the experiential learning gap:** Strengthen the connection between classroom learning and real-world experiences by promoting internships and hands-on opportunities.
- Establish career communities:** Create supportive groups or networks for students with similar career interests, providing resources and guidance tailored to their specific goals.

If we had more time, we would go forward with our survey and create real life data driven results from the survey and incorporate that with our comparative analysis to generate specific recommendations.

## Acknowledgements & References

I would like to thank Professor Jon Chun and Katherine Elkins along with my fellow IPHS concentrators in the class for their valuable feedback on my project. I would also like to thank Professor Jay Corrigan for educating me on the IRB process. My Kenyon peers have been a vital part of this project, so I am truly grateful to them.

\*All the data used for the visualizations have been collected from college/university websites  
\*Ethical use of LLM, chatGPT and other AI have been followed