

# Dickinson

## **Test Optional Admission Policy**

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## Test Optional Policy History

- Fall 1995 was the first admissions cohort admitted under the test optional policy
- Questions for consideration included:
  - Do test scores continue to serve a useful function as an indicator of college performance?
  - Do they provide information about students that cannot be determined by other means?
  - Do they unfairly discriminate against disadvantaged and/or minority students?
  - Are “low scores” preventing otherwise solid candidates from applying to Dickinson?

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## Test Optional Environment in 1995

- 241 institutions with test optional policies in place
- Represented 12.7 percent of the total number of U.S. four-year institutions (n=2,244)
- Peer schools with test optional policies included Bates, Bowdoin, Lafayette, Connecticut, Union, Middlebury, and Franklin & Marshall

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## Why Dickinson?

- Bates test optional policy at the six-year mark found that their new policy encouraged more students from diverse backgrounds to apply because they felt Bates was concerned more about “intellectual integrity, hard work, and real achievement” than about test scores.
- These findings were consistent with Dickinson’s practice of admissions in which grade point average, recommendations, application essays and interviews were the most important factors in the acceptance or rejection of candidates.
- New policy was a public declaration of practices already in place at Dickinson.

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## Effect on Public Perception – 1995 - 1997

- Is Dickinson's policy of making test scores optional seen as a lowering of admissions standards?
  - Only a small (but increasing) percentage of applicants chose not to submit test scores
  - Frequency of non-submitters yield rate was higher than the overall pool
  - Policy did not appear to result in increased applications
  - Dickinson was one of approximately 13 percent of U.S. colleges adopting a test optional policy
  - In the entering class of 1995, non-submitters did not perform as well academically as submitters.
  - In the entering classes of 1996 and 1997, non-submitters and submitters performed equally as well academically.

## More Recent Cohorts

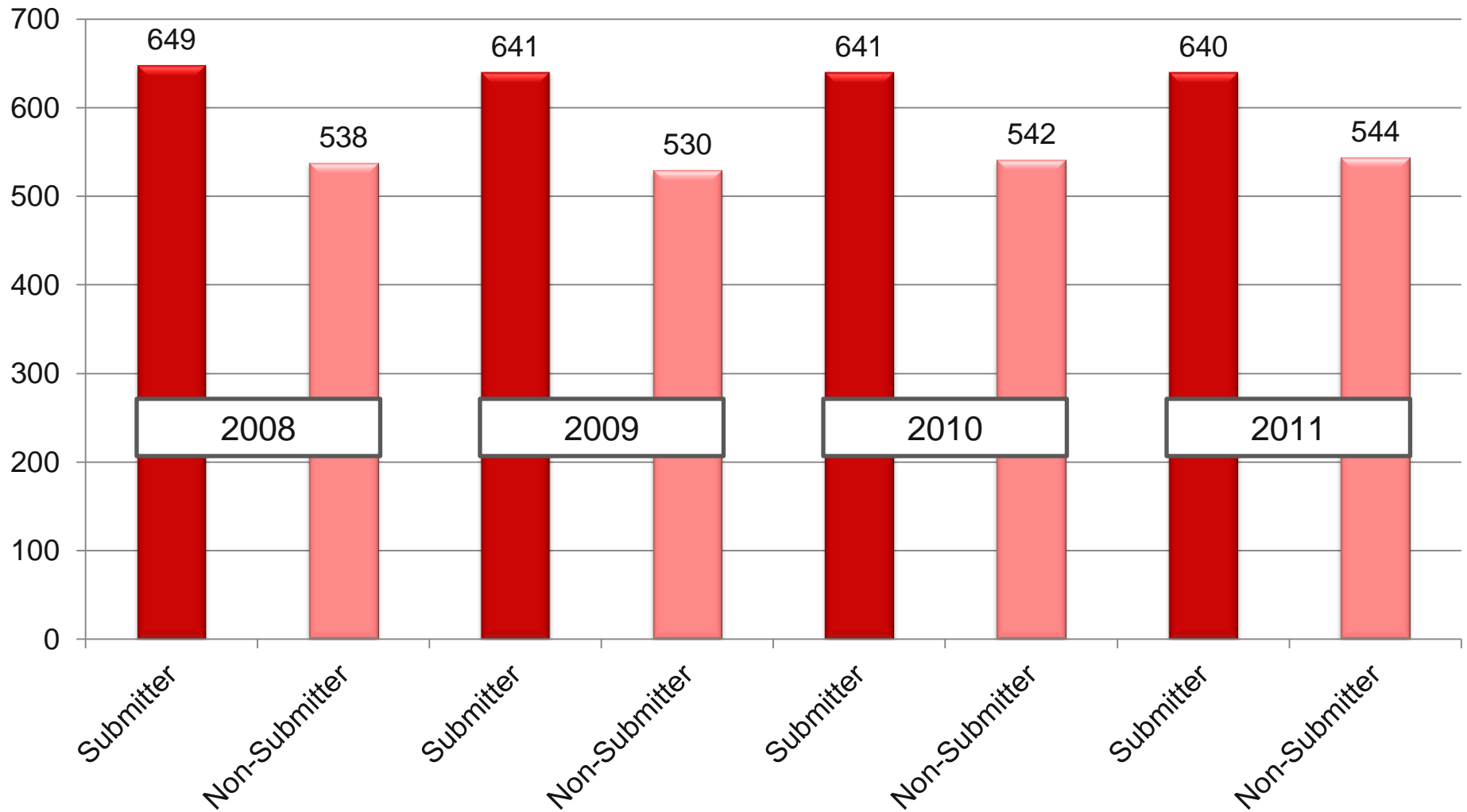
- Quality (2008-2011)
  - SAT Scores
  - ACT Scores
  - HS Rank Percentile
  - Average Number of AP Exams
  - HS GPA
- Demographics (2008-2011)
  - SOC
  - Gender
  - Athletes
- Performance (2008-2010)
  - Retention Rate
  - FY GPA

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## Quality Indicators – Submitters vs. Non-Submitters

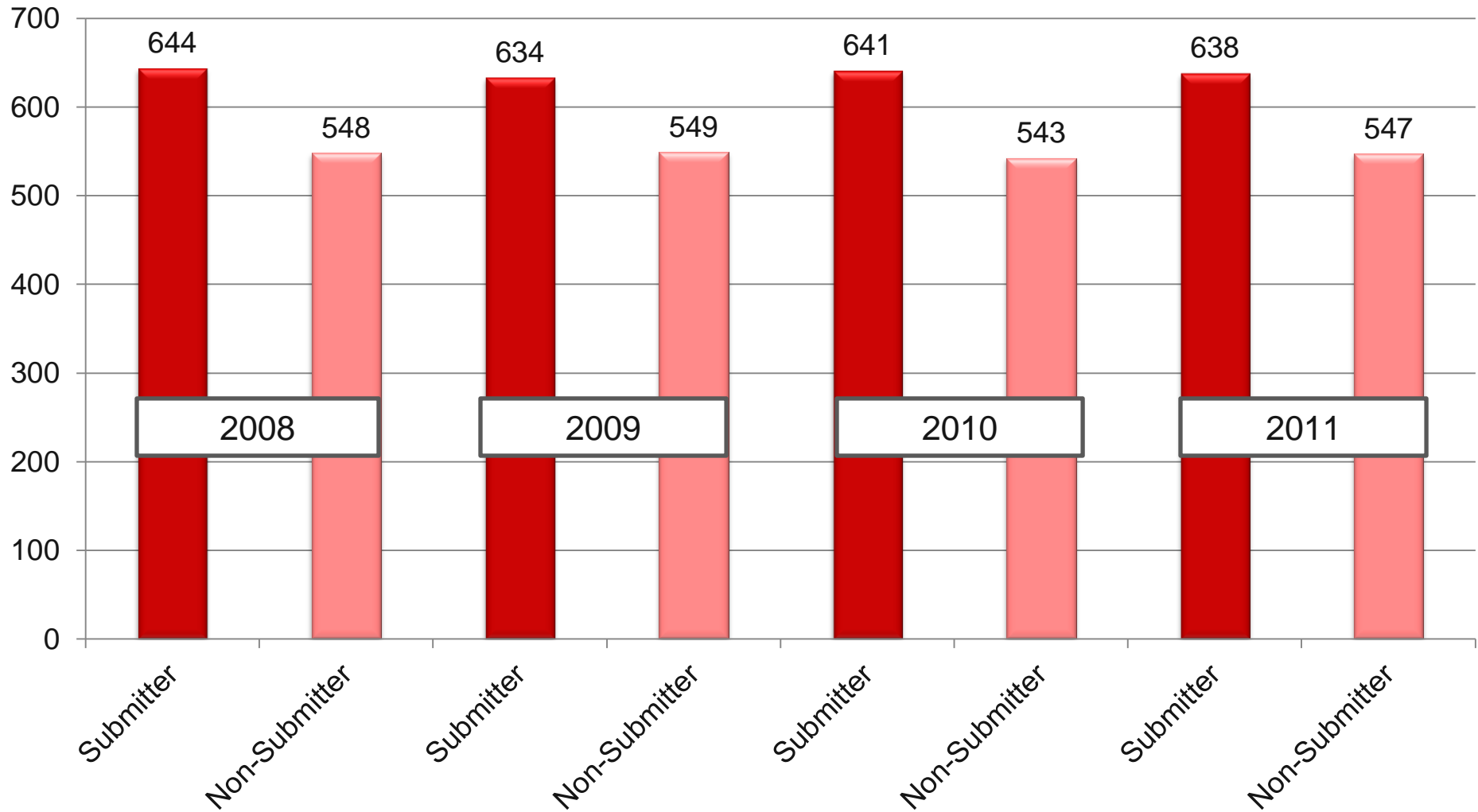
- Non-submitters still appear quite capable based on these quality measures.
- In all cases the year-to-year difference of submitters vs. non-submitters remains fairly constant.

# Average SAT Critical Reading Scores

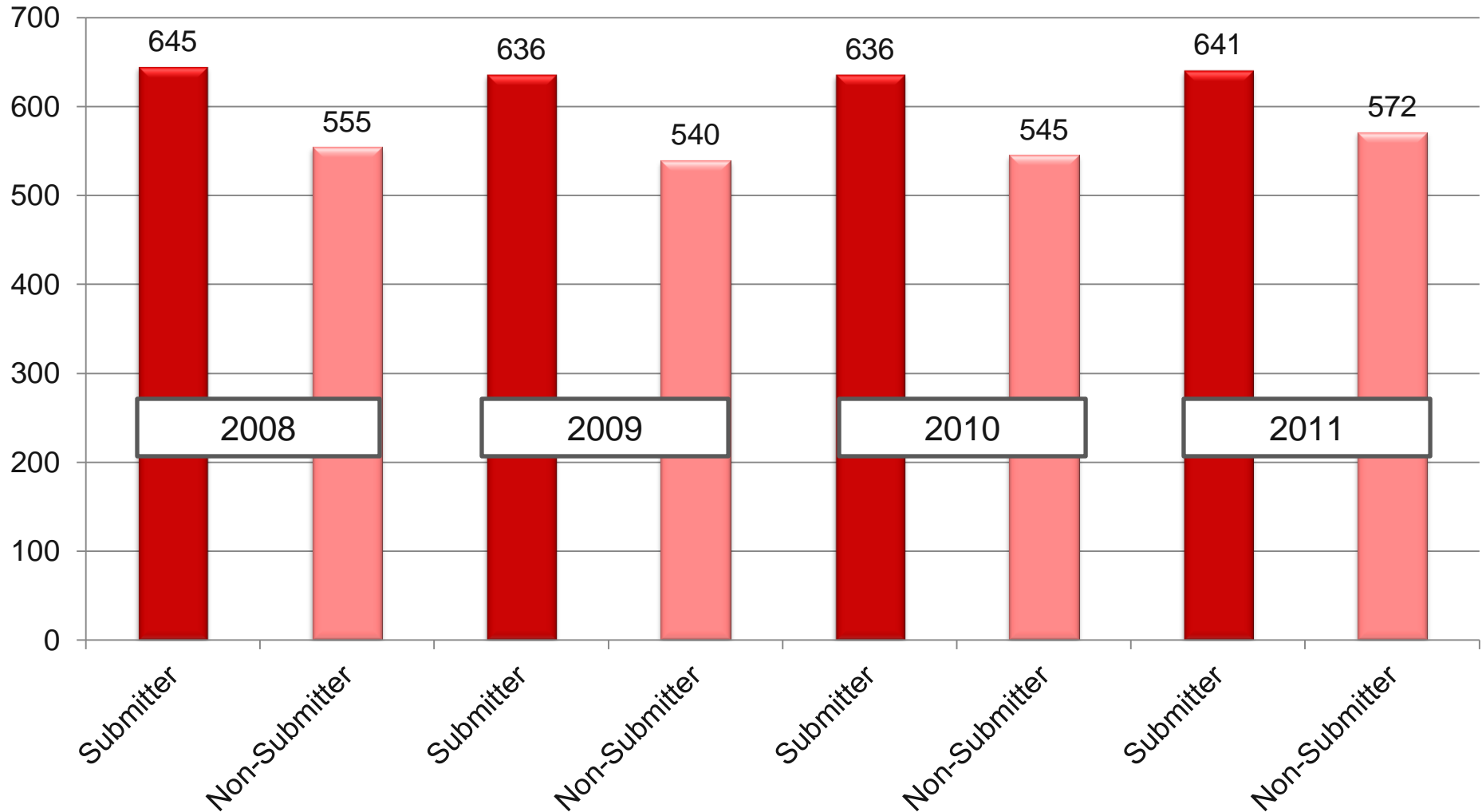




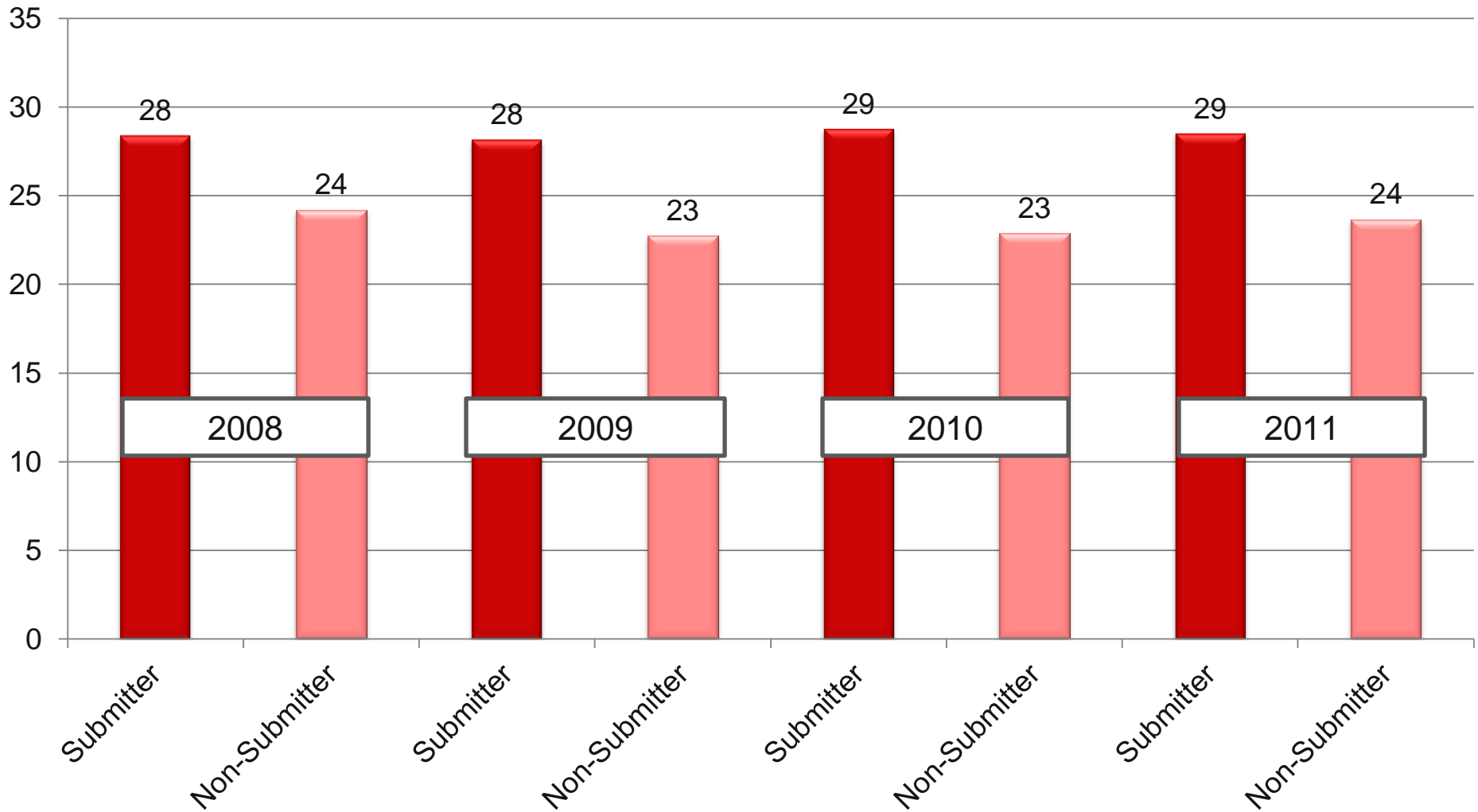
## Average SAT Math Scores



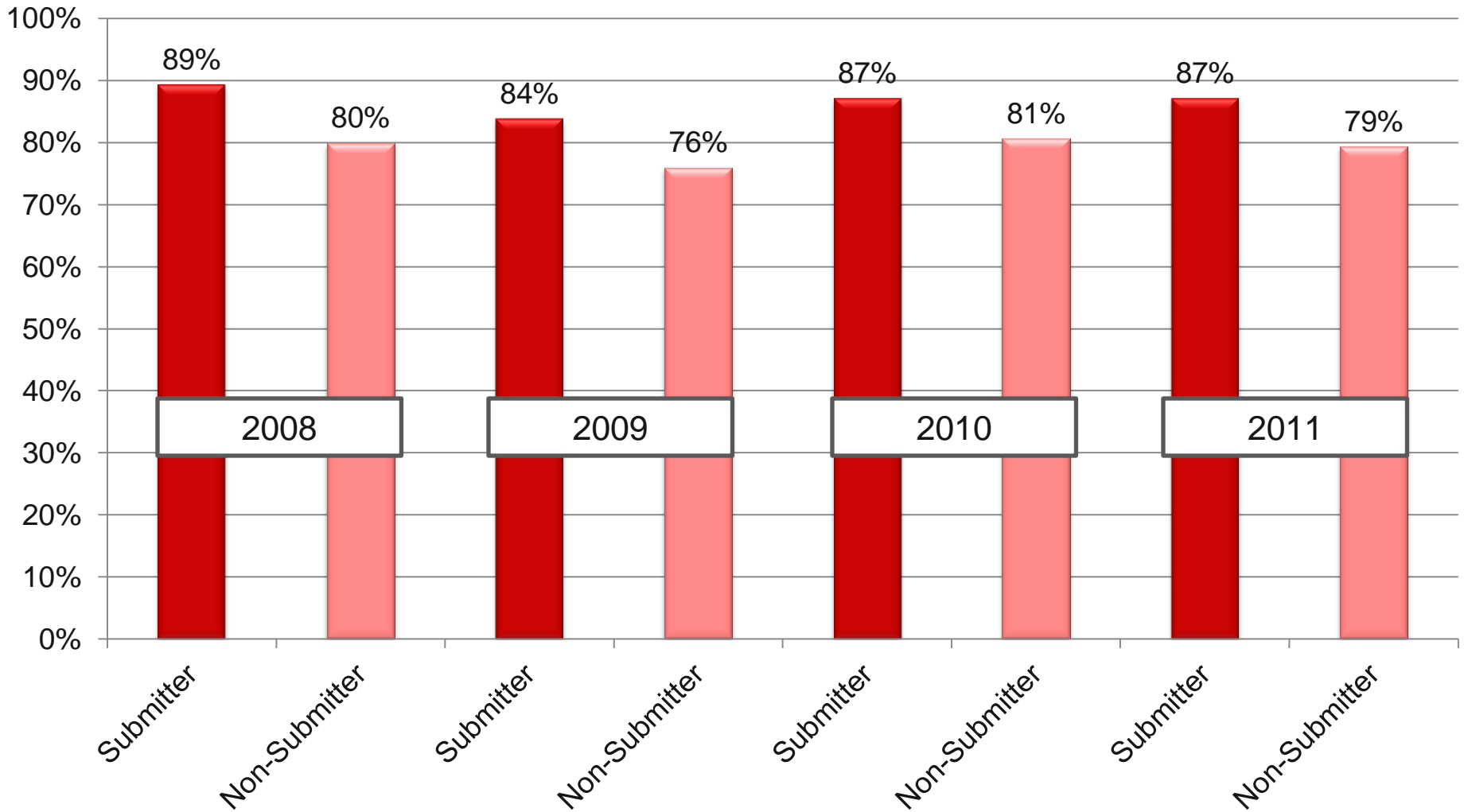
## Average SAT Writing Scores



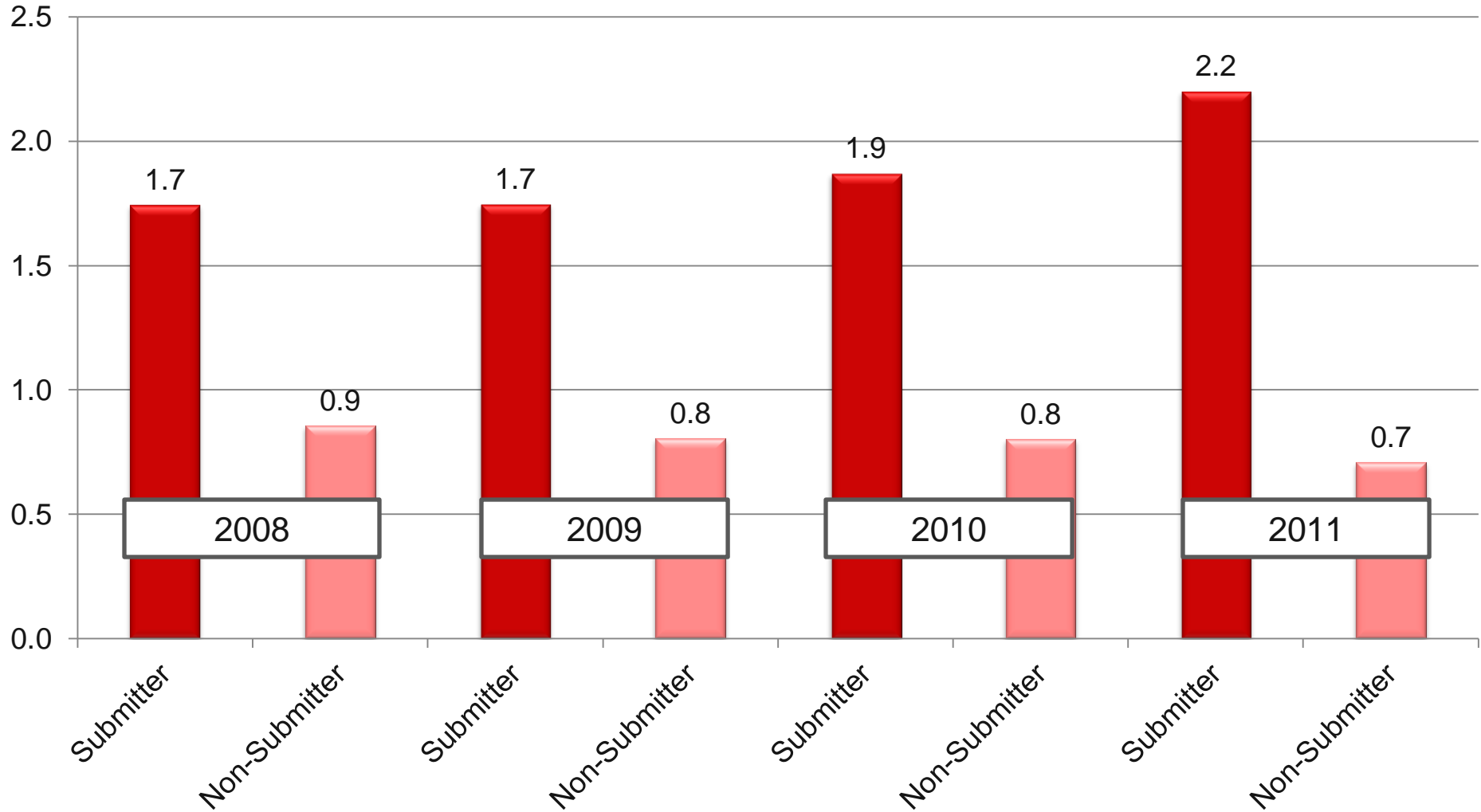
## Average ACT Composite Scores



## Average HS Class Rank Percentile

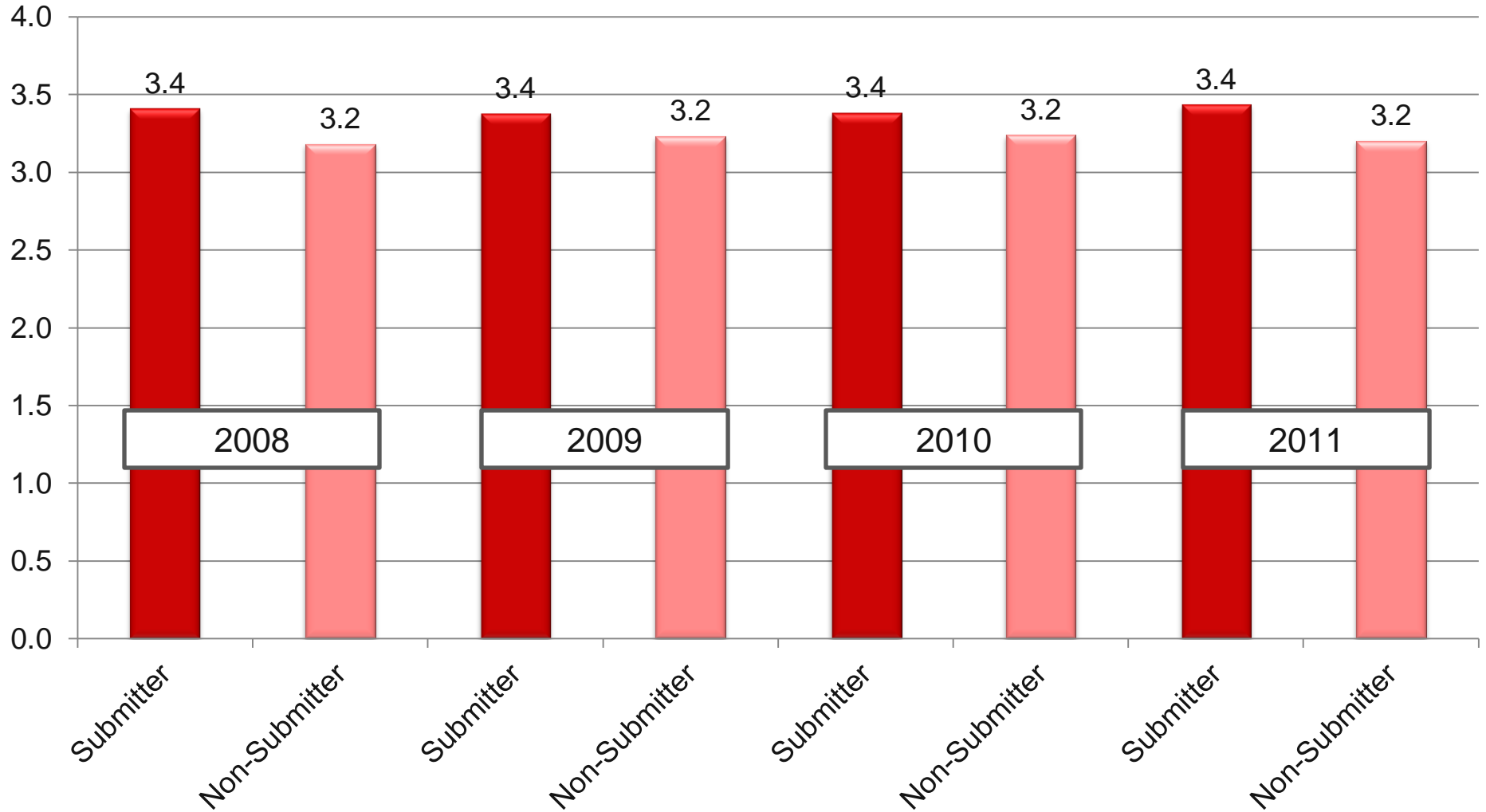


## Average Number of Advanced Placement Exams



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## Average HS GPA

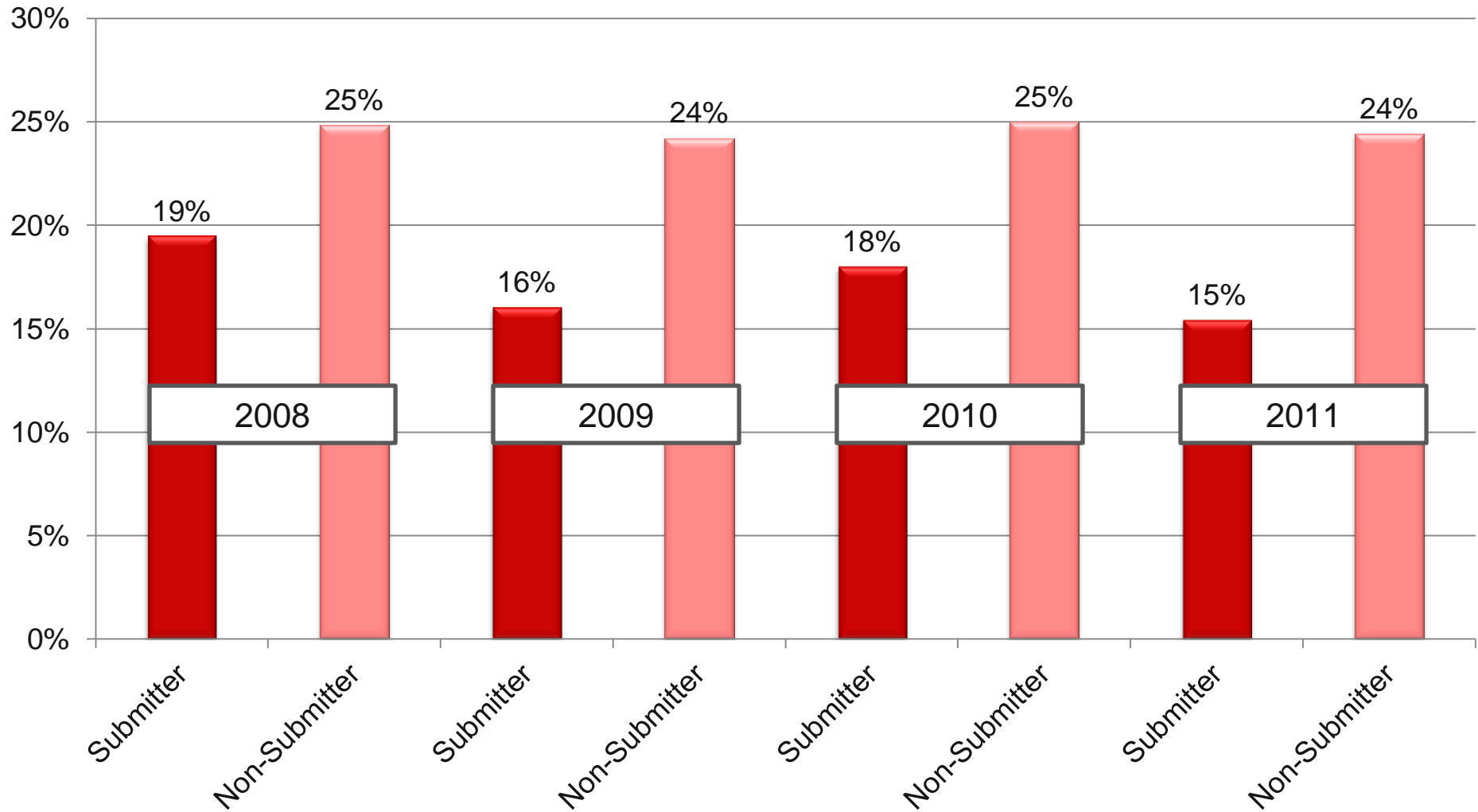


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## Demographics – Submitters vs. Non-Submitters

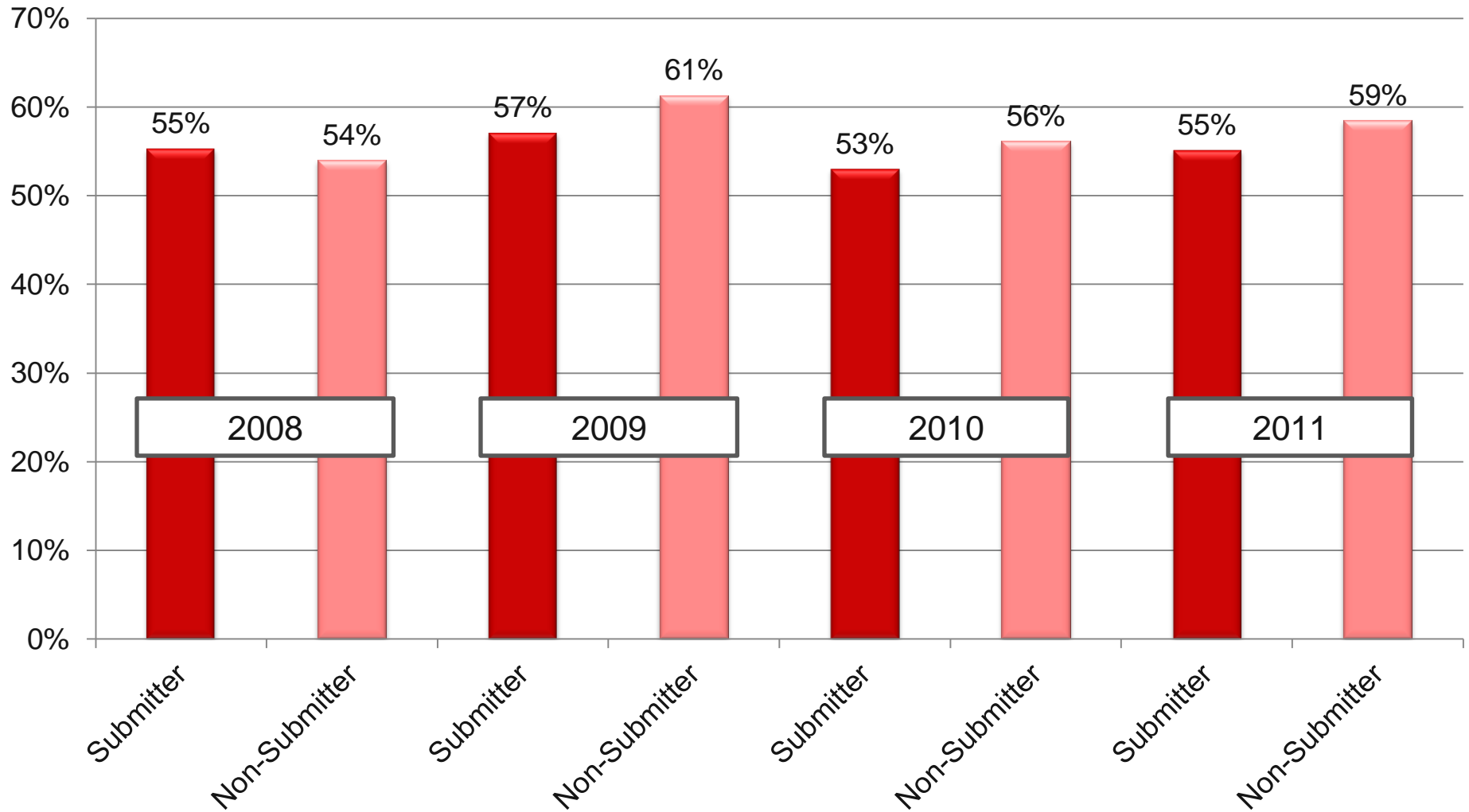
- Test optional policy increases access for students of color
- Larger proportion of females are submitting scores in the recent years
- Test optional policy is NOT being used a “backdoor” to admit athletes
- Higher percentage of “highly selective” colleges are introducing test optional admissions policies

## Percent Underrepresented Racial/Ethnic

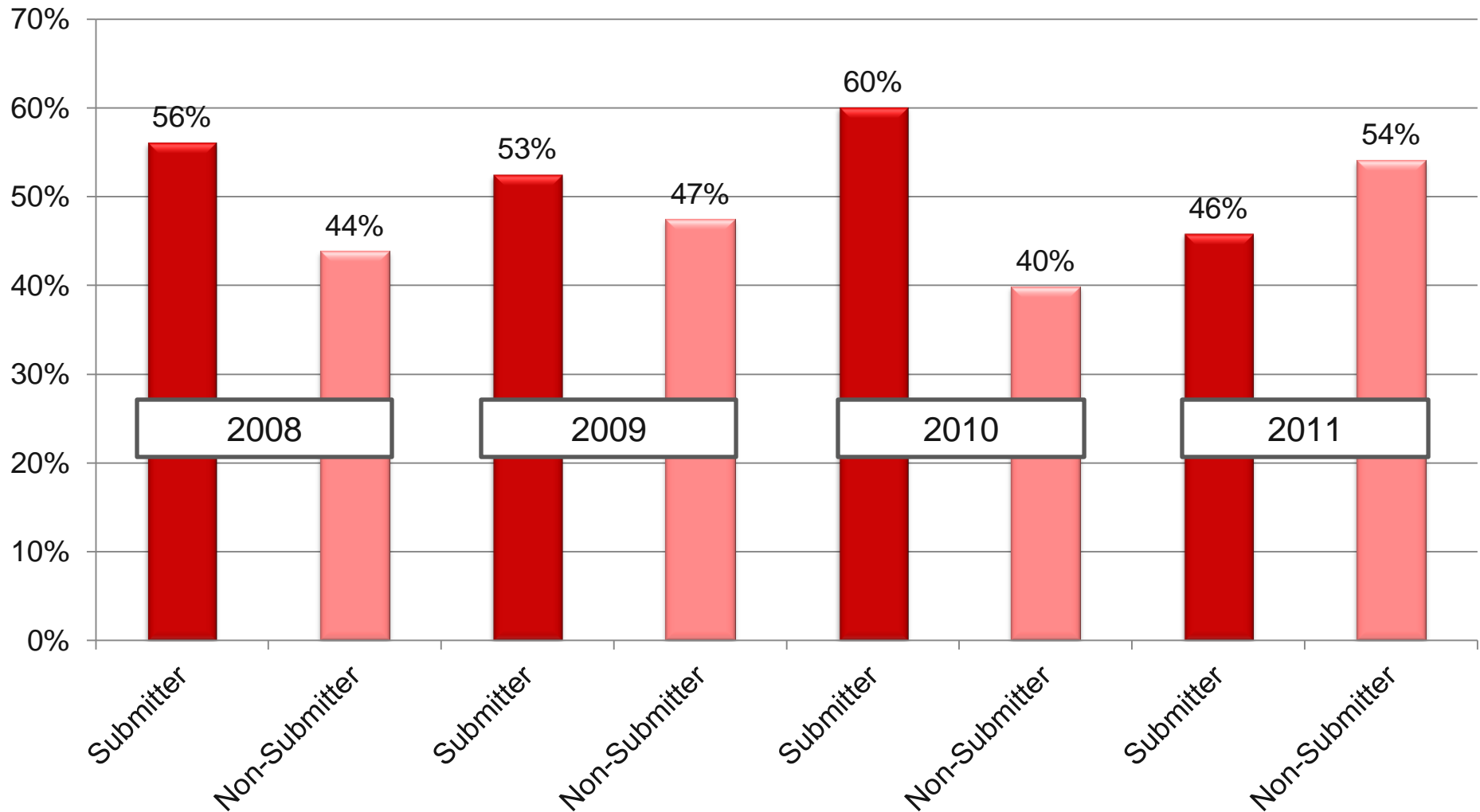




## Percent Female



## Proportion of Athletes Submitting Scores

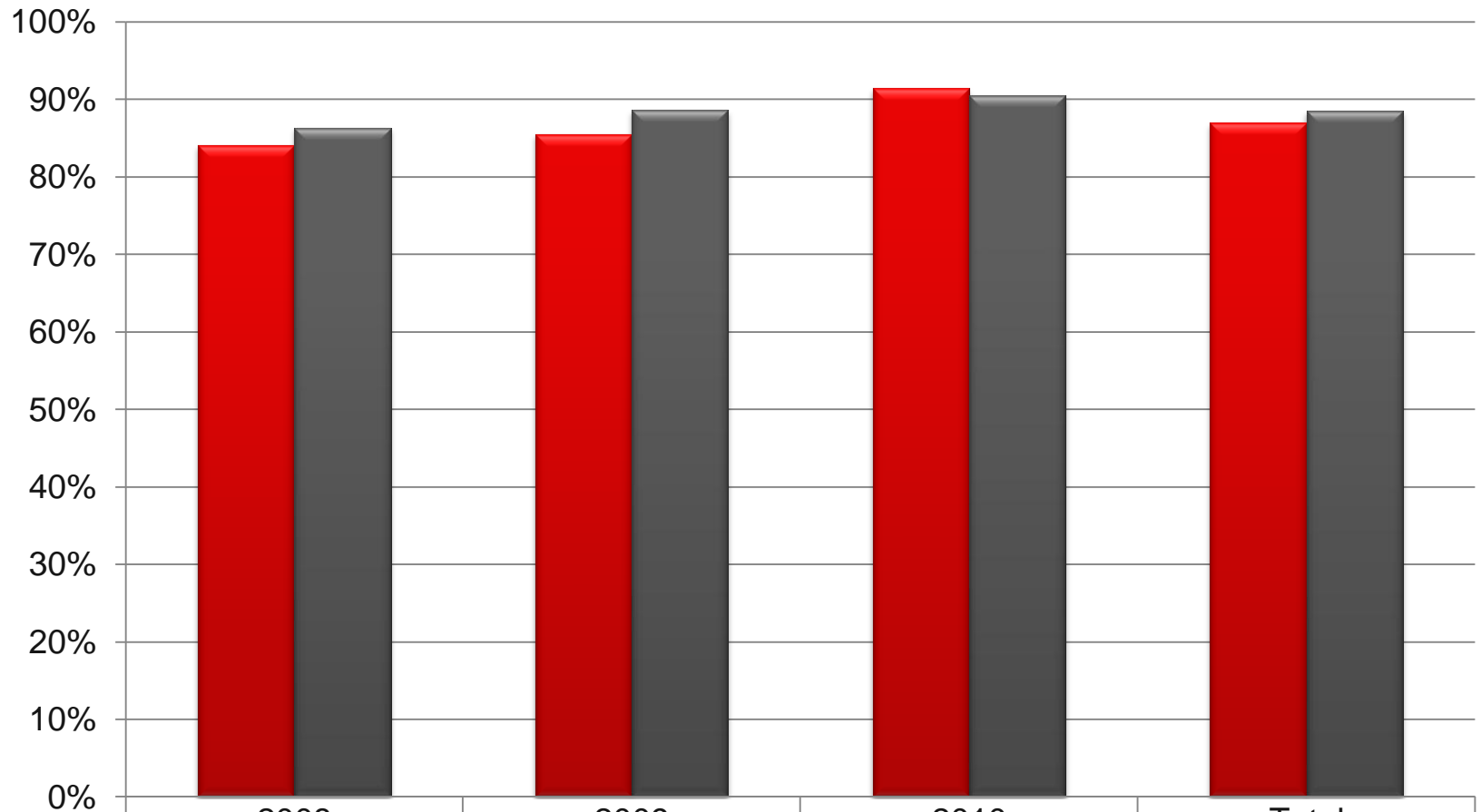


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## Performance – Submitters vs. Non-Submitters

- A statistically significant difference does exist for FY GPA of submitters vs. non-submitters, (about 0.3 percentage points) but as a whole both groups are performing quite well.
- Even though the difference is small (2% on average), the benefit in retention for non-submitters outweighs the slight difference in FY GPA

## Retention Rates 2008-2010



■ Submitter

84%

86%

91%

87%

■ Non-Submitter

86%

89%

91%

89%

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## Summary

- **Question:** Are we in a stronger place today than we were prior to our test optional policy?
- **Answer:** Yes.
  - Increased diversity
  - Increased access
  - Does not significantly erode overall quality
  - Non-submitters are performing competitively
  - Additional benefit of increased retention