

DEFINING PROMISE: OPTIONAL STANDARDIZED TESTING POLICIES IN AMERICAN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS

<http://www.nacacnet.org/research/research-data/nacac-research/Documents/DefiningPromise.pdf>

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

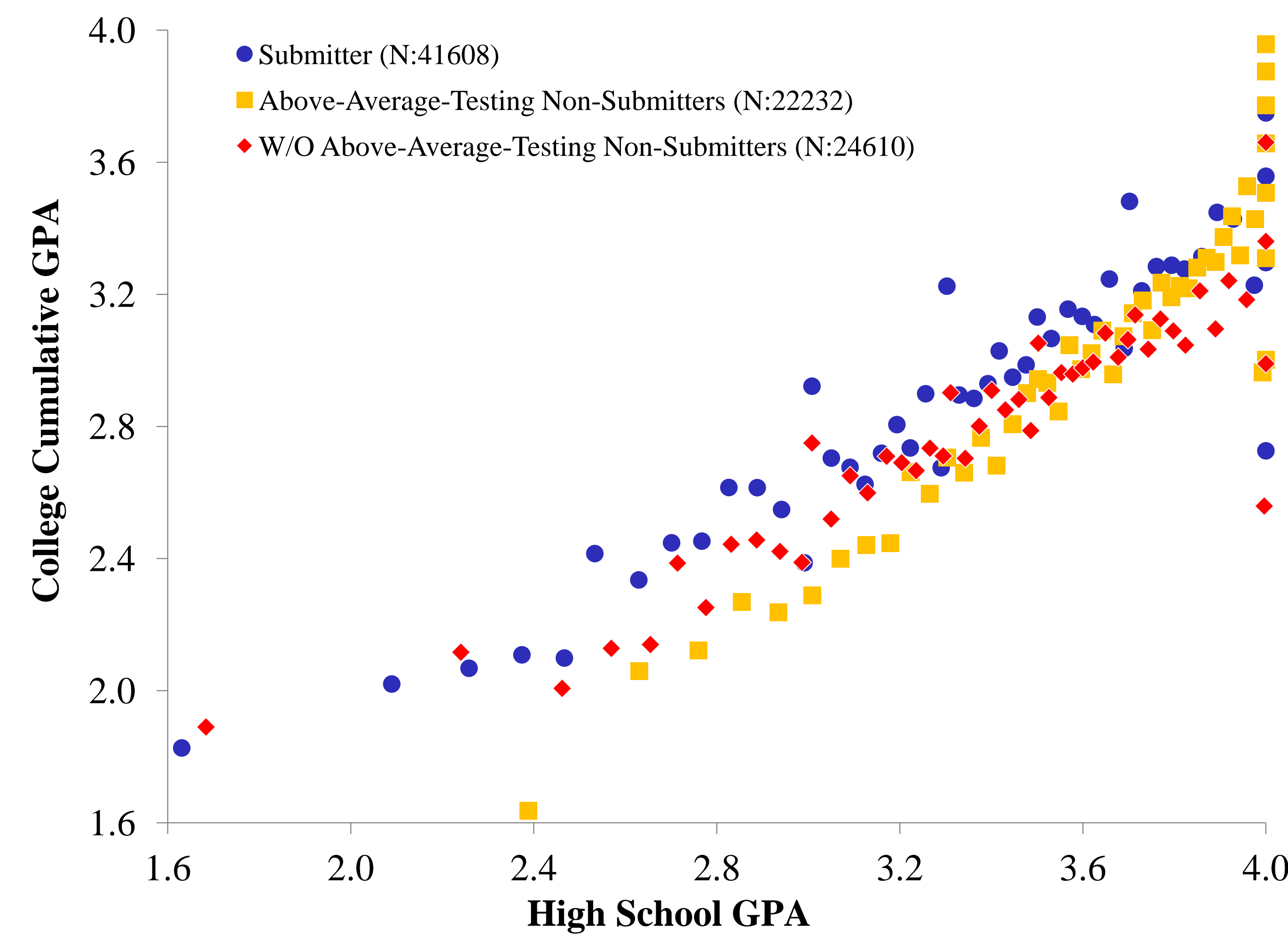
- The study examines optional standardized testing policies at 33 colleges and universities, as measured by cumulative college GPAs and graduation rates.
- Statistical analyses show no significant differences in college cumulative GPA and graduation rates between submitters and non-submitters. *Differences between submitters and non-submitters are .05 of a GPA point, and .6% in graduation rates.*
- However, the two groups have significantly large differences in their SAT / ACT scores of 113 points.
- College admissions decisions are reliable for students admitted without SAT or ACT scores. Testing may artificially truncate pools of applicants who will succeed.
- Students with strong HSGPAs generally perform well in college, despite modest testing. In contrast, students with weak HSGPAs earn lower college Cum GPAs and graduation rates, even with stronger testing. *A clear message: hard work and good grades in high school matter, and they matter a lot.*
- Non-submitters are more likely to be first-generation-to-college, minorities, Pell Grant recipients, women and LD students. But white students apply as non-submitters at rates within low single percentages of the 30% overall average, so the policy has wide appeal.
- Non-submitters strengthen enrollments in multiple ways: larger applicant pools, ED apps, diversity, geographic breadth, and successful LD students.
- Non-submitters with wide ranges of family financial capacities help balance institutional budgets.
- Non-submitters get fewer no-need merit awards, despite higher Cum GPAs and graduation rates. Institutions should examine testing criteria for merit awards.

SAMPLING OVERVIEW

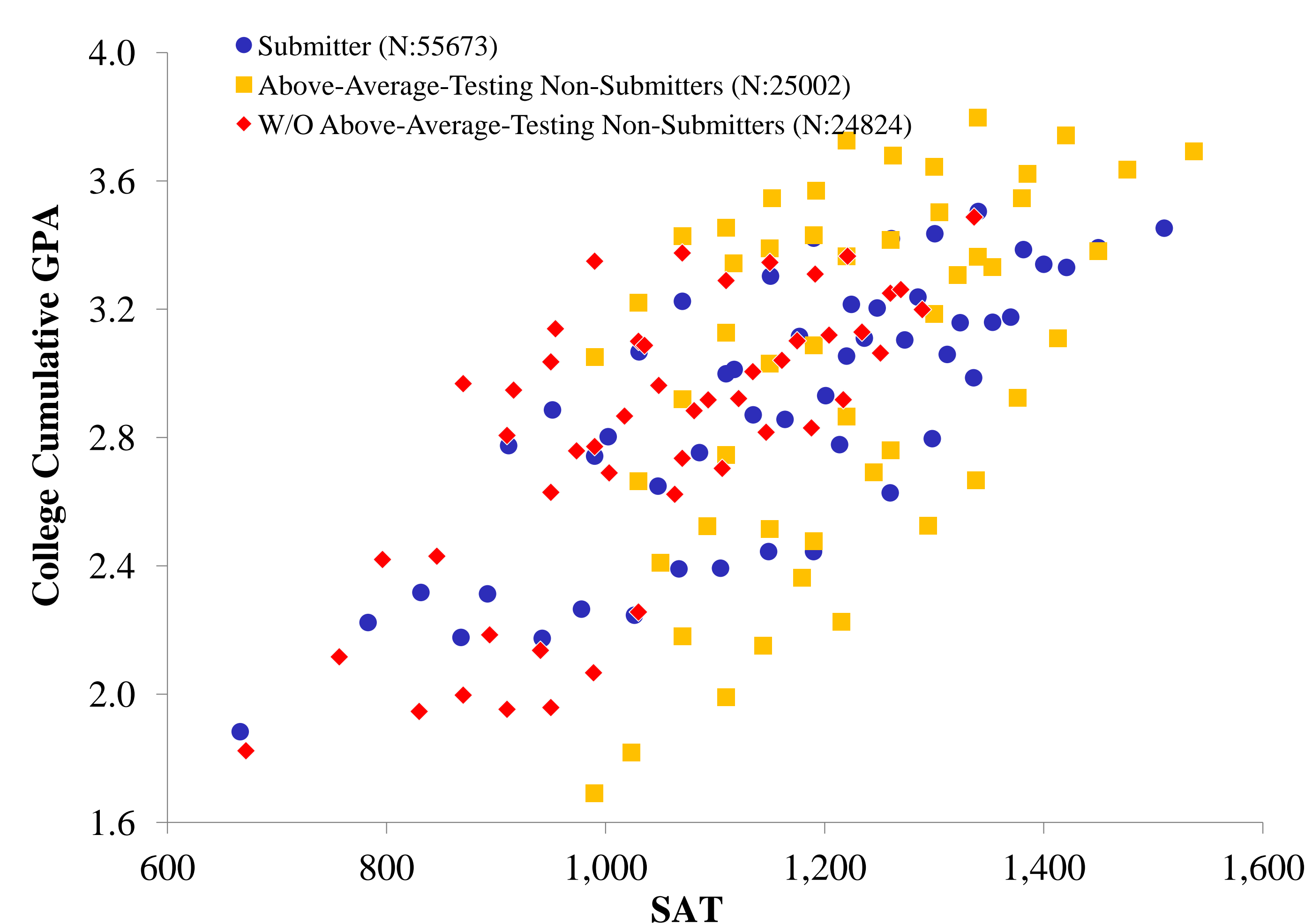
- 33 institutions (122,916** student/alumni records) between 2003-2010 made up of:
 - 20 private** colleges and universities (**37,611**)
 - 6 public** universities (**71,831**)
 - 5 minority-serving** institutions (**12,691**)
 - 2 arts** institutions (**783**)

HSGPA vs TESTING

Academic Overlay: College Cumulative GPA and High School GPA
(students entering 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010)



Academic Overlay: College Cumulative GPA and SAT
(students entering 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010)



- Despite the wide variety of high schools, four-year HSGPA shows strong, consistent correlation with college cumulative GPA. Standardized testing has a much less consistent correlation.
- We hope future research will continue to examine the "false negatives" seen in standardized testing, and shift to four-year rather than first-year college GPA as the normal outcome measure.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Summary of Key Statistics
(students entering 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010)

	Non-Submitters	Submitters	
<i>n</i>	62067	60743	
High School GPA	3.45	3.28	Cohen's <i>d</i>
SAT (See caveat below)	1129	1154	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Cumulative GPA	2.92	2.88	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Graduation Rate	65.8%	64.5%	Chi-Square

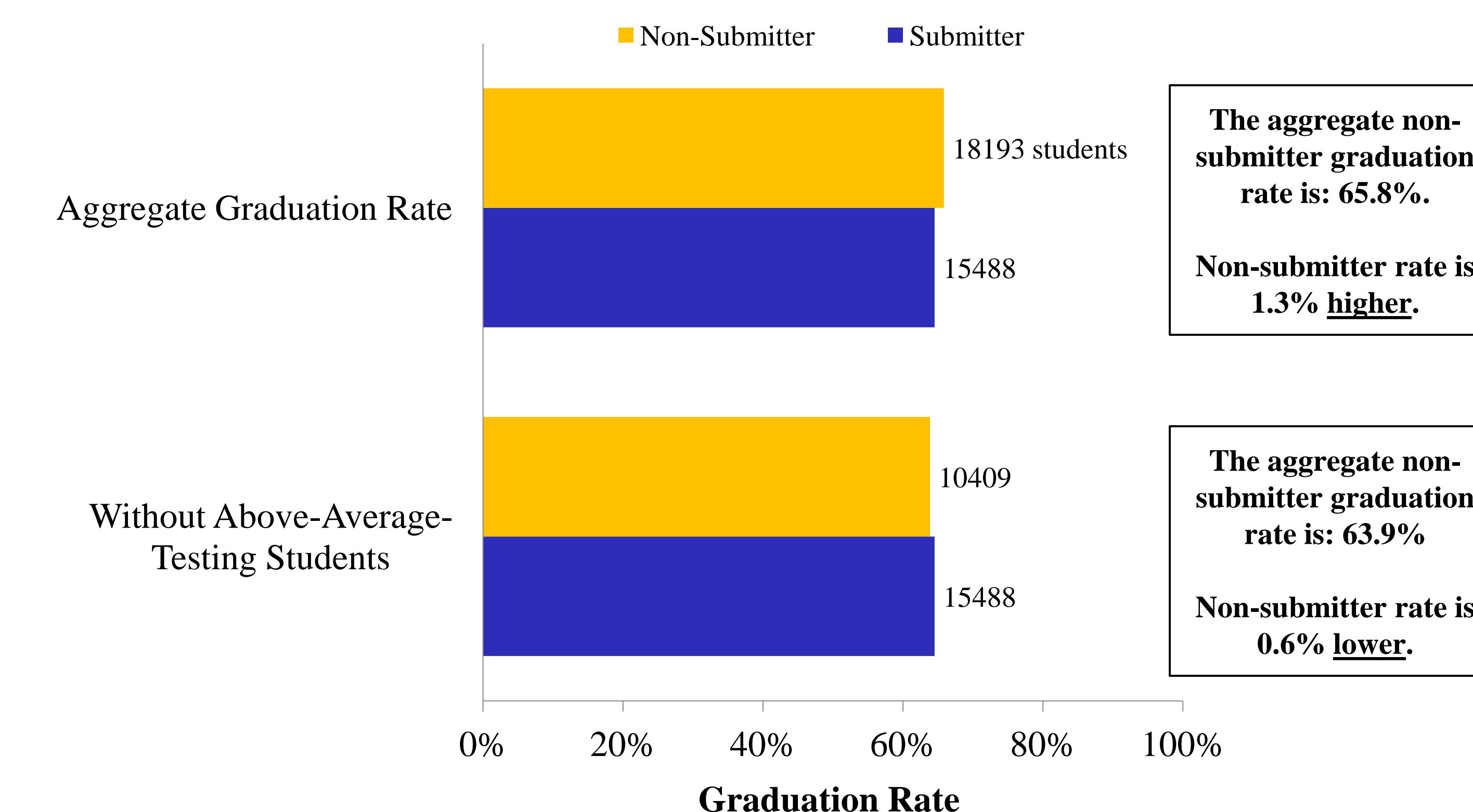
COLOR KEY	
Cohen's <i>d</i>	
< 0.1	= trivial difference
0.1 - 0.3	= small difference
0.3 - 0.5	= moderate difference
> 0.5	= large difference

Without Above-Average-Testing Students

	Non-Submitters	Submitters	
<i>n</i>	36648	60743	
High School GPA	3.35	3.28	Cohen's <i>d</i>
SAT (See caveat below)	1041	1154	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Cumulative GPA	2.83	2.88	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Graduation Rate	63.9%	64.5%	Chi-Square

COLOR KEY	
Chi-Square Test	
No Significant Difference	
Statistically Significant Difference $p < .000$	

Graduation Rate Comparison Between Submitters and Non-Submitters
(Graduated Cohorts entering 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007)



ANALYTIC TOOLS

- Cohen's D:** Measure magnitude of difference between non-submitters and submitters
- Chi-Square Test:** Statistical analysis of difference
- Other: Scatterplots, bar-graphs, R-squared

RESEARCH TEAM

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