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Introduction

Research found that living in campus housing contributes to a better student academic performance, higher retention, and higher graduation rate (Astin, 1977; Pascarella, Terenzini, Blimling, 1994; Schuh, 1999). Lauren Schudde (2011) suggests that colleges should consider evaluating the impact of their campus housing programs on academic outcomes to inform important housing policy decisions.

Using the impact of campus housing as a theoretical framework, we conducted this study to examine if campus housing positively affects student retention at the University of Florida.

Data Sources

Student data were requested from Registrar's Office. This data set was matched to Student Housing database to identify students who lived in campus housing each semester. Four cohorts from Fall enrollment were selected: Fall 2010, Fall 2011, Fall 2012, and Fall 2013. Variables included: Gender, Race/ethnicity, Matriculation Date, Enrollment by Semester, Fall to Spring Retention, Fall to Fall Retention, and Campus Housing Status. Total student numbers in each cohort were:

Fall 2010 entering students	(n=3673)
Fall 2011 entering students	(n=3932)
Fall 2012 entering students	(n=3814)
Fall 2013 entering students	(n=4091)

Participants

Entering students in the Fall semesters for 2010-2013 included a larger female student population, from 55.4% to 58.4%. Students who lived on campus at first enrollment each year ranged from 77% to 80%. The number of Hispanic students have increased over the years, with a declining trend of white students. The table below shows student fall enrollment by race/ethnicity in these four years.

	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	American Indian/Alaska Native	Non Resident Alien	Not Reported
Fall 2010	13.0%	5.8%	15.0%	61.6%	0.5%	1.1%	2.9%
Fall 2011	12.2%	7.5%	16.3%	60.2%	0.8%	0.8%	2.3%
Fall 2012	13.0%	4.9%	17.8%	60.4%	0.5%	1.2%	2.3%
Fall 2013	12.8%	5.1%	18.1%	59.8%	0.6%	1.1%	2.5%

Data Analysis

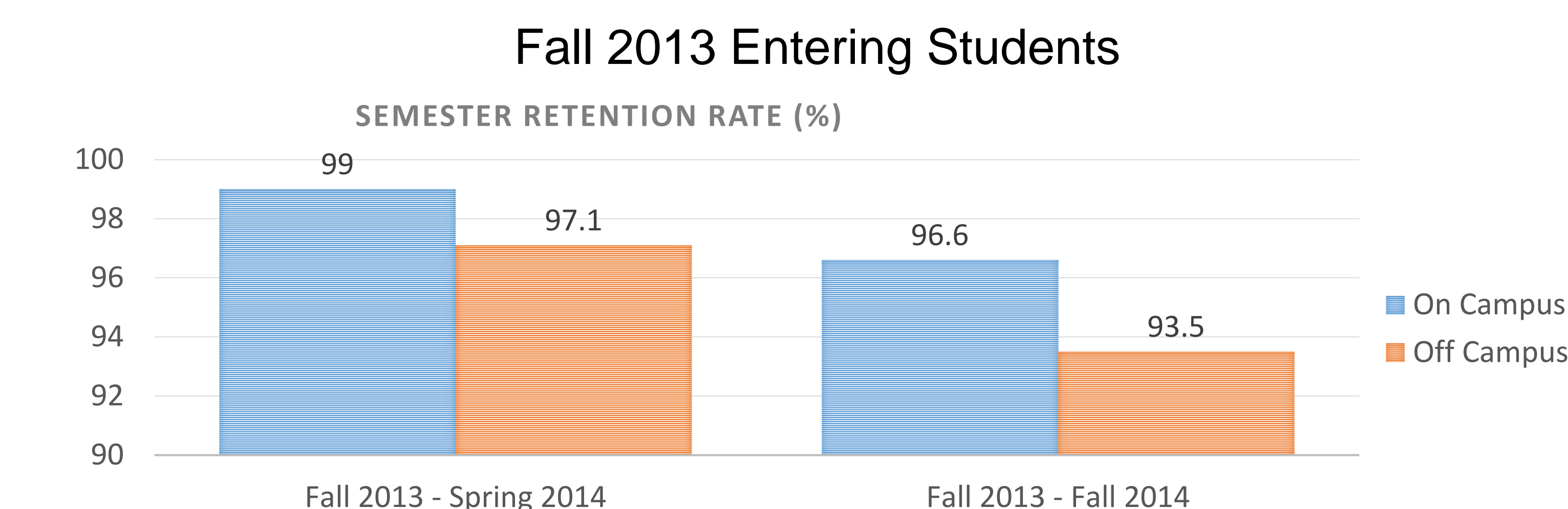
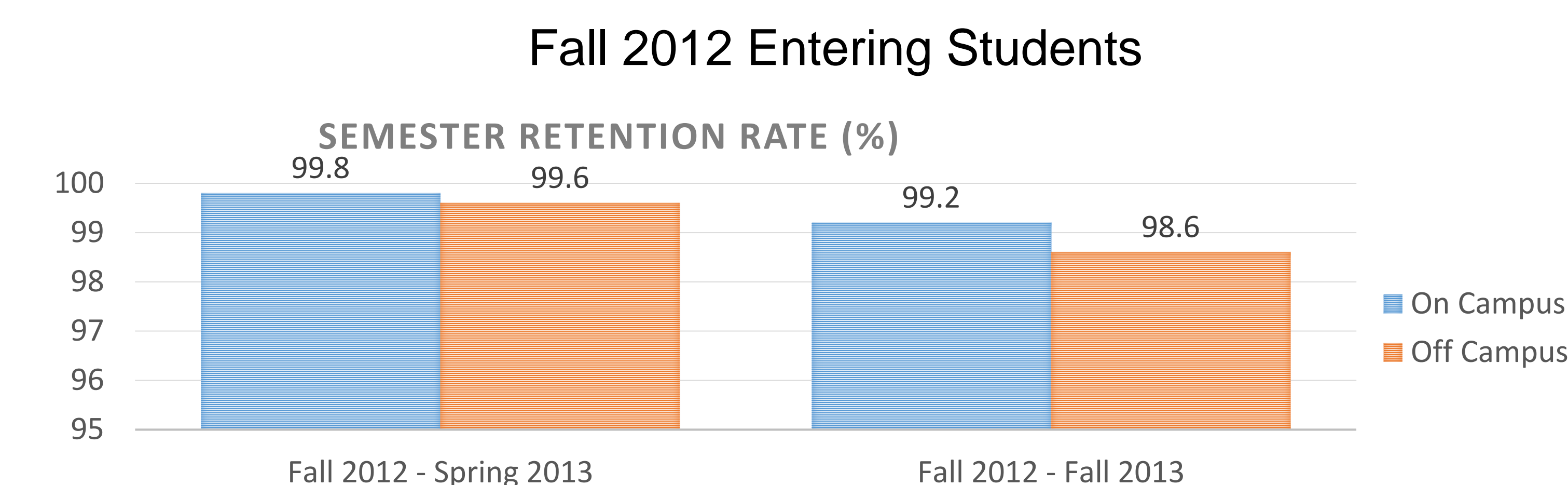
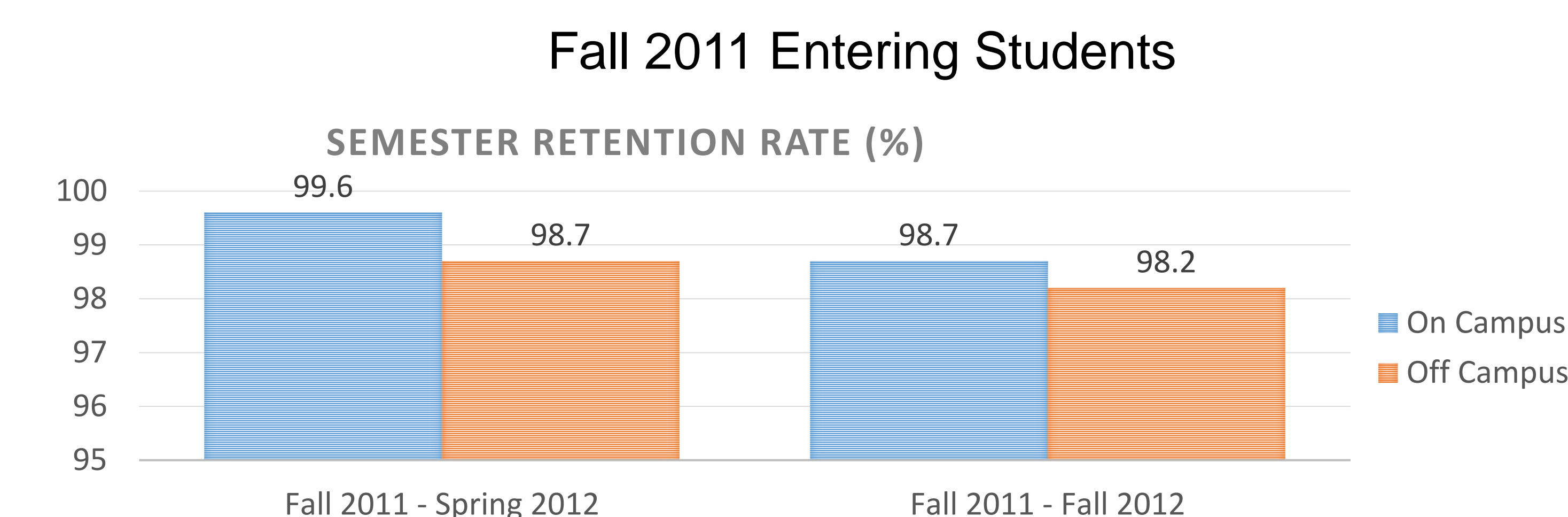
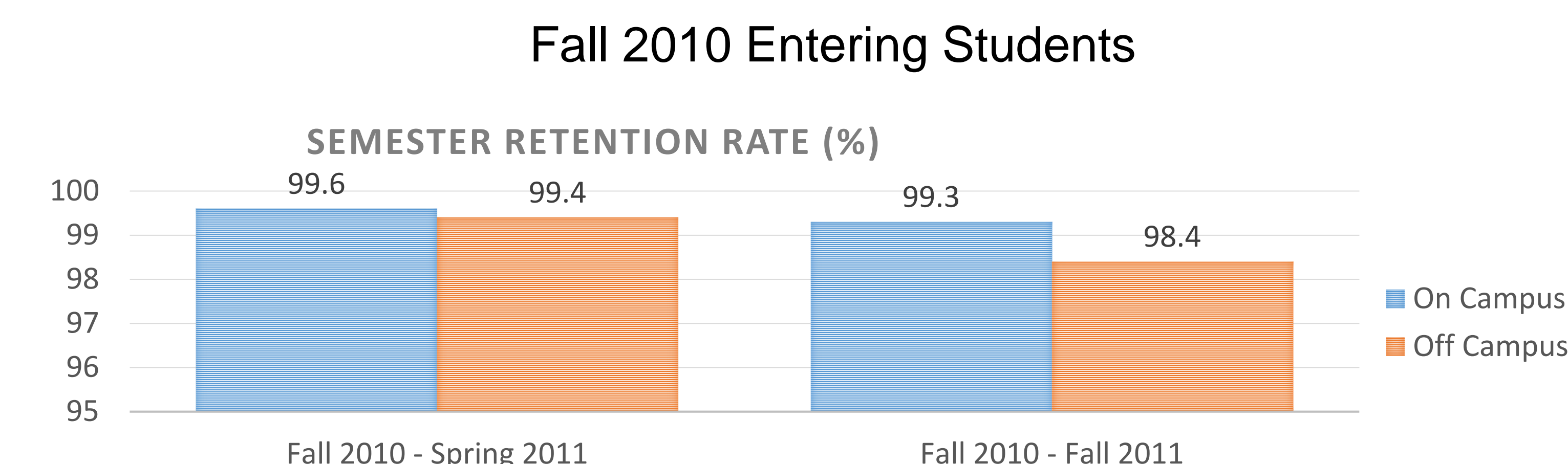
Semester to semester retention was examined by comparing students who lived in campus housing vs. students who lived off campus.

- Correlation analysis was used to examine Fall to Spring retention and Fall to Fall retention, i.e. first year to second year retention.
- Regression analysis was conducted to examine how campus housing affect student retention, controlling for demographic variables, i.e. gender, and race/ethnicity?

Results

Retention: Comparing on-campus and off-campus students' retention rates during the first three semesters of enrollment (1st Fall term, 1st Spring term, and 2nd Fall term) whose first term of enrollment was the fall semester:

- Students living on-campus had a **significantly higher** Fall to Spring retention rate than their off-campus peers for Fall 2011 and Fall 2013.
- Students living on-campus had a **significantly higher** Fall to Fall retention rate than their off-campus peers for those students starting Fall 2010, Fall 2011, and Fall 2013.
- Controlling for student demographic information, i.e. gender, racial/ethnic background, campus housing in general positively affects student retention.



Conclusion

Students who lived in campus housing had a **higher** first year to second year **retention rate** in three years among four year cohorts and a higher Fall to Spring retention rate for two cohorts. Campus housing was positively related to a higher retention rate. The residence life programs may have **positively impacted** student adjustment to college in their first year. Campus housing may have **better connected students** to their academic programs and have helped them **adjust to college life**, therefore yielding a higher retention rate for on-campus students.