

## Hispanics more confident about economy, FAU poll finds

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**H**ispanics' confidence in the economy and their own personal finances increased to a new high in January, according to a survey by the Florida Atlantic University.

An index of consumer optimism among Hispanics across the nation jumped to 101 last month, up from 87.4 in December, the highest level since FAU's Business and Economics Polling Initiative started the index in August 2014. The lowest index possible is a 2, the highest 150.

Hispanics in the South, which includes Florida, were the most upbeat, said Monica Escaleras, director of BEPI. "They are very optimistic about the future," she said.

The rise in optimism nationally can be attributed to large gains among younger and higher-income Hispanics, she said.

"The optimism of consumers is a result of the strengthening of the economy," Escaleras said. "I think the economy is moving toward recovery. According to a report by the Labor Department, the economy has created more than 1 million jobs over the past three months and suggests that U.S. workers are getting higher wages."

In the latest poll, 63 percent of surveyed Hispanics reported they are better off than a year ago, up from 47 percent in December 2014.

When asked about their perceptions of personal finances a year from now, 80 percent said they expect their financial situation to be better in a year, up from 62 percent in December.

FAU chose to focus its first monthly polling on Hispanics because they are the fastest growing minority in the United States and because they play a significant role in South Florida's economy, Escaleras said.

The survey of 500 Hispanics across the nation was conducted Jan. 1 to Jan. 31 and has a margin of error of 4.3 percent.

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