



HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY

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HPU POLL: CONSUMER SENTIMENT INDEX SHOWS LESS NEGATIVE OVERALL VIEW OF ECONOMY

HIGH POINT, N.C., Sept. 24, 2012 – High Point University announced today that its Consumer Sentiment Index based on HPU Poll data again shows an uptick in North Carolinians' attitudes toward both their personal finances and U.S. business conditions.

The Consumer Sentiment Index rose to 82 (81.9) based on February polling. That is the highest that the HPU Poll has registered since it began fielding the questions in February 2010. Recent readings included 75 for March 2012, 59.9 for September 2011 and 67.6 for March 2011. The new, higher reading was driven by increases in North Carolinian's assessments of their personal finances and business conditions in the country as a whole.

“The gradually improving consumer sentiment among North Carolinians is a reflection of the slowly improving economy,” says Gerald Fox, an associate professor of economics at High Point University's Phillips School of Business. “The unemployment rate in the state has slowly declined from a high of 11.4 percent at the beginning of 2010 to the current level of 9.7 percent. Obviously, much improvement remains before unemployment decreases to the more healthy 5 to 6 percent range. Still, the improving consumer index numbers are moderately encouraging.”

“The Consumer Sentiment Index continues to give us new insight into changing attitudes toward the economy,” says Sadie Leder, associate director of the HPU Poll. “We will continue to track how North Carolinians feel about their personal finances as well as many other aspects of the economy. It is part of the public service the HPU Poll provides for North Carolina.”

The Consumer Sentiment Index is based on five questions that ask respondents about their financial situation to a year ago, likely financial situation a year from now, business conditions a year from now, general economic trends five years into the future, and whether now is a good time to purchase major items for their homes. (The full question wordings are available on the HPU Poll website at <http://src.highpoint.edu/index.php/hpu-poll>).

The High Point University Survey Research Center fielded the survey from and Sept. 8-13 and Sept. 15-18. The responses came from 515 adults with landline and cellular telephones in North Carolina selected by a Random Digit Dial (RDD) method giving the survey a margin of sampling error of approximately 4.4 percentage points. For smaller subsamples the margin of sampling error is larger. The data is weighted toward population estimates for age and landline and cell phone usage. In addition to sampling error, factors such as question wording and other methodological choices in conducting survey research can introduce additional error into the findings of opinion polls.

The HPU Consumer Sentiment Index is based on questions used for the Thomson Reuters/University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers (<http://www.sca.isr.umich.edu/>). The High Point University Phillips School of Business and directors of the HPU Poll consulted with the directors of the Surveys of Consumers and other state survey organizations that calculate similar state-wide indexes before it first asked the questions in 2010.

Further results and methodological details from the survey and can be found at the Survey Research Center website at <http://src.highpoint.edu/> or from Dr. Martin Kifer, director of the HPU Poll, at mkifer@highpoint.edu or 336-841-9333.

At High Point University, every student receives an extraordinary education in an inspiring environment with caring people.SM HPU, located in the Piedmont Triad region of North Carolina, is a liberal arts institution with over 4,200 undergraduate and graduate students. It is ranked by U.S. News and World Report at No. 1 among Regional Colleges in the South and No. 1 among Up and Coming Regional Colleges in the South. Parade Magazine lists HPU in the top 25 private schools in the nation. HPU was selected in the 2012-2013 list of "Colleges of Distinction." The university offers 44 undergraduate majors, 43 undergraduate minors and 11 graduate degree programs. It is a member of the NCAA, Division I and the Big South Conference. Visit High Point University on the Web at highpoint.edu.

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