



## Report from University Public Service Organizations

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The Southern Consortium of University Public Service Organizations (SCUPSO) held its annual meeting in early April. We are a member, but I did not attend this year due to budget constraints. SCUPSO includes many different kinds of public service centers and institutes—Georgia and Tennessee have large operations, but others consist of only two or three people. Most of them are in the South, but they also are located in Ohio, Delaware, and New Mexico. SCUPSO lacked focus early in its history, when its motto was “No Mission, No Purpose, Proud of It.” Now it has organizational support from the Southern Growth Policies Board and we have collaborated on successful substantive projects. This year’s meeting focused mostly on internal issues for the units, including ideas about managing in tough economic times. Here’s a sample of what our colleagues are doing from the [meeting summary](#).

1. Working with county and municipal associations to examine how local governments are coping with cutbacks (Kennesaw State U). Holding a series of regional meetings with local government managers on the same issue (UVA).
2. Moving from using master’s students to PhD students on projects because they offer continuity and greater expertise (U of Delaware).
3. Offering a series of short podcasts—the first is on public records law and three or four will be launched at once (U of Tennessee).
4. Offering webcasts for judges and court staff. They have been well received, but online courses are expensive and most judges will not complete an entire online course. Resources on frequently-asked questions have been effective with judges (U of New Mexico).
5. Working with traditional faculty to facilitate their involvement in the public policy arena (Mississippi State U).
6. Providing online quarterly *Economic Situation Report* for South Carolina (Clemson U).

I encourage you to take a look at the summary of the meeting. We can learn from their experience and some of it may be relevant to our strategic planning. The acronym may be dreadful, but SCUPSO people are incredibly nice and always willing to lend a hand. I first met three of our colleagues at SCUPSO meetings—David Ammons, Bill Rivenbark, and Carl Stenberg. Let me know if you see anything interesting in the summary or if you want to learn more from a SCUPSO unit.