

“Compensation” for Volunteer Faculty at OLLI UH Manoa

Since program inception in 1997, the lifelong learning program at the University of Hawaii at Manoa has been fortunate to have the services and dedication of excellent, unpaid peer faculty. We were attracted to the idea of volunteer instructors from the outset because of the financial implications and because of the ready access that we had to retired faculty from the University of Hawaii system and retired professionals from the community who were knowledgeable teachers and expressed interest in serving as a volunteer. Although we do not pay our instructors, we provide modest “incentives” in the form of \$200 university bookstore gift certificates for books and supplies; parking privileges on campus; and free access to courses and events. Is this a workable solution? So far, so good. To date, more than 150 volunteer instructors have provided our program with more than 300 courses and workshops. Full course enrollments, many with waiting lists, provide evidence of the increasing demand for program offerings and the general satisfaction with and approval of our volunteer instructors. Serving as a volunteer instructor does not work for everyone, of course. Honolulu is an expensive city with an extremely high cost of living. But, for retired persons who enjoy occasional teaching assignments working with an engaged and appreciative student body, this arrangement is ideal. Said one retired faculty member at the recent close of a successful seminar session at OLLI, “The undergraduates here never appreciated my insights or my jokes the way these OLLI students have. They read, they challenge me, they’re critical thinkers. This is why I went into teaching in the first place.”