

HAWAII GREAT TEACHERS SEMINAR

BUILDING A HAWAII GREAT TEACHERS SEMINAR

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Introduction

As an integral part of the Silver Anniversary celebration, the University of Hawaii Community College System will initiate a Hawaii Great Teachers Seminar, to be held July 30-August 4, 1989.

Faculty development has been of primary concern for the University of Hawaii Community Colleges. Indeed, with seven campuses serving over 20,000 students on all major islands, staff development is necessarily an essential priority. The Excellence in Teaching Conference has been successfully established as an annual professional development event which provides opportunity for issue and content interchange. The next logical step in the facilitation of faculty growth is a Hawaii Great Teachers Seminar. This seminar will draw from a multi-national community college faculty who are concerned about teacher revitalization and professional growth. Mainland, local, and Pacific Basin participants will find the seminar a lively and intense process-oriented study of innovation and solutions to problems in teaching.

Historical Sketch

The Great Teachers Seminars have had a history of success. Nearly two decades old, they are offered each summer from coast to coast at sites such as California, Canada, Iowa, Massachusetts, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin. Thousands of community college faculty have improved their classroom skills by pursuing the meaning of great teaching in week-long retreats. In spite of what the name might suggest, the seminar is not so much an assembly of great teachers as it is a group of dedicated post-secondary educators in search of the "great teacher." Institutional acceptance of the Great Teachers Seminars has grown to the point where it has been reported that certain colleges have negotiated union contracts guaranteeing staff development funds earmarked for faculty attendance. A review of past participant rosters shows that a majority are experienced instructors eager to learn and share new ways to improve classroom practices.

In 1969, Roger Garrison founded the National Seminar for Great Teachers with funding from the American Association for Community and Junior Colleges. This action formalized the master teacher movement started by Garrison in 1962, demonstrating his concern for superior teaching in two- and four-year post-secondary institutions. For nearly twenty years, Garrison directed the National Seminar at Westbrook College, Portland, Maine.

David Gottshall, an instructor at College of DuPage, founded the Illinois Seminar in 1970 after encountering the Maine experience. The midwest branch soon assumed the name, the Great Teachers Seminar, while Garrison's activities became known as the National Seminar for Master Teachers. Following Roger Garrison's death in 1984, the Master Teachers Seminar was relocated to Greenfield, Massachusetts, under the sponsorship of Greenfield Community College.

The philosophical position of both men are reflected in the daily activities of the Great Teachers Seminar. Central themes stated in literature collected by Leeward faculty who have attended the National Seminar for Master Teachers and the Great Teachers Seminar are:

1. that much excellent teaching takes place in American higher education;
2. that teachers who are striving toward mastery of their craft have much to share with each other; and
3. that by bringing teachers together in a relaxed, informal atmosphere to share their successes and their problems, the skills of all can be enhanced.

Seminar Overview

The size and format of the Great Teachers Seminar make it appealing for those who are seeking a uniquely interactive learning climate. There are usually between 25-40 participants in a given seminar. California's Seminar is an exception. With participation limited to the 106 California Community colleges, it has an enrollment cap of 60 with a waiting list of as many as 100 within-state faculty.

The emphasis of the seminar is process-oriented rather than content-oriented. Consisting of six days and five nights, this seminar is somewhat lengthier and more intense than a content-oriented teaching conference. The format is relatively informal, but with some minimum structure. This minimum structure, which allows a creative and personally meaningful learning program, consists of the following:

1. Each participant prepares two brief papers focusing on a) an innovation in classroom teaching and b) a specific problem he has sought to solve while instructing. The first two days are centered on sharing these materials in small groups, with ample opportunity for feedback and reflection on how the experience transfers to life back in the classroom. In a typical seminar, a participant thus gains over 60 specific strategies for problem-solving and for teaching during the course of the first two days.
2. On the second day of the seminar, the staff conducts a needs assessment of the participants, thereby allowing the subsequent sessions to focus on the special interests and problems of that particular group. The sessions, then, are tailored uniquely to the concerns of members.
3. Participants are given the opportunity to share their research and instructional expertise. Indeed, participants are encouraged to bring innovative teaching paraphernalia as well as research data to share during community meetings.
4. A library is created where college catalogues and other educational materials are displayed for use and for sharing during the week.
5. Educational field trips are scheduled with the purpose of a) building camaraderie among the

participants; and b) demonstrating practical applications of teaching skills. These trips focus on the interrelationship of teaching with the economic, political, sociological, psychological, and historical elements of the community: thus, the transfer of teaching to the community.

6. The seminar is culminated in a farewell dinner, a celebration of sharing with professionals.

Because of the variety of disciplines represented in any given seminar, and because of the emphasis on instruction rather than on specific subject matter, psychology teachers learn from vocational-technical instructors, chemists learn from philosophers, drama teachers from astronomy experts, with the end result being that teaching skills are broadened by the transdisciplinary perspectives. Throughout the week, the priority remains: practical exploration of ways to improve classroom instruction.

Gottshall has noted that the underlying design employed in the Great Teachers Seminars is easily adaptable to fostering growth among a number of professional populations. California stands as a good example. The California Administrative Leadership Seminar, the California Academic Senate Leadership Seminar, the Asilomar Women's Leadership Seminar, and numerous topic conferences and colloquia have been conducted using the Great Teachers format. The validity of these programs is measured by the fact that they are flourishing as regularly scheduled staff development activities.

Goals and Objectives

The first Hawaii Great Teachers Seminar will be held between July 30 and August 4, 1989. Leeward faculty have generated campus and system interest for several years. Presentations and discussions have gained the support of the Leeward Division Chairs and Faculty Senate, the Council of Community College Faculty Senate Chairs, the Employment Training Office, the Deans and Provosts of the seven campuses and Chancellor Joyce Tsunoda during the 1986-1988 academic years. In addition, there will be close coordination with the Community College Staff Development Coordinator during 1988-89 to accept the new Hawaii Great Teachers Seminar as a mainstay of the community college faculty development master plan.

For the 1988-89 academic year, the key goals and objectives initiating this seminar are:

Goal 1: Gain faculty and administrative acceptance and support.

Objective 1: Gain fixed, annual campus funds for faculty attendance.

With the assistance of Leeward's new Acting Provost, Dr. Peter Dobson, an invitation was extended to David Gottshall, founder of the Seminar, to conduct a feasibility study in February of 1988. The consultant met with Chancellor Joyce Tsunoda, the System Staff Development Coordinator, the Leeward faculty and administration, the various other campus administrators, and also made a presentation at the 1988 Excellence in Teaching Conference. These sessions served to cement the foundation of a Hawaii Seminar. It not only generated further interest and

identified problems unique to the University of Hawaii community college system but called attention to the need for fixed, annual campus funds for faculty attendance. A return visit by Gottshall in February, 1989, is scheduled. Sessions with the various campuses will continue the work necessary for successfully marketing and funding Hawaii community college participants. Each seminar is self-supporting. Preliminary study shows it will cost about \$500 per registrant. With the exception of transportation, this includes the room, all meals, and special events during the week.

Goal 2: Obtain a suitable site for holding the program.

Objective 2: Select and reserve the facility.

Experience has shown that the seminar needs a somewhat isolated setting. Urban hotels and especially academic campuses do not provide a comfortable, quiet and conducive environment. An inexpensive site that fosters a casual, interactive climate is desired. Because field trips are an important part of the Seminar, ample parking and proximity to areas of educational interest are necessary prerequisites. Oahu sites explored were Camp Erdman, Camp Kokokahi, First Hawaiian Bank's Makaha Recreation Center, and military installations such as Bellows Field and Hickam Air Base.

The Kilauea Military Recreation Center (KMC) on the grounds of the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park has been selected as the site of the 1989 Seminar. An Armed Forces Recreation Center located 32 miles outside the town of Hilo on the Big Island of Hawaii, KMC is ideal for our needs. Participants will enjoy the facilities of an established conference center situated at the 4,000 foot elevation level. The weather at this time of the year often brings lows of 40 degrees at night and highs of 70 degrees.

The atmosphere at this mountain resort is relaxed and the accommodations provide for a delightful, restful, and scenic retreat. The Volcano Golf Course is adjacent to KMC and recreational opportunities such as bicycling, hiking, bowling, a physical fitness center, volleyball and tennis courts are within walking distance at the Camp. KMC has a chapel, dispensary, gift shop, service station, post office and general store for groceries, sundries, clothing and reading material. Many cabins have a fireplace, cable TV and a small refrigerator. KMC can be reached within forty-five minutes by private auto and by scheduled bus service from Hilo airport. There are numerous daily flights between the islands as well as direct mainland connections.

Goal 3: Identify competent and well-trained staff.

Objective 3: Identify key faculty and provide them with the opportunity to train as facilitators.

While several Leeward faculty members have participant experience and the author has served as staff at the National Great Teachers Seminar in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, it is clear that it will take much expertise to create a great Great Teachers Seminar in Hawaii. Gottshall has repeatedly stated that the foundation of a Seminar rests with the staffing. Both the California and Canada Great Teachers Seminar were successfully launched by inviting experienced staff from existing Seminars. Using this model for development, the inaugural Hawaii Seminar staff will consist of facilitators from the California, National, and Texas Seminars. After the third year,

the staff will consist of a mix of Hawaii Seminar graduates and mainland-trained facilitators selected by David Gottshall. The selection of facilitators will be given top priority as the seminar is a dynamic learning process. A well-chosen staff is the key to continuing success.

Goal 4: Develop an effective marketing strategy.

Objective 4: Promote the seminar at state, national, and Pacific Rim levels.

Publicizing the birth of the Hawaii Great Teachers Seminar requires long-term commitment of energy, time, and resources. In addition to in-state efforts, contact was made with several administrators from Pacific Basin community colleges during the American Association for Community and Junior Colleges National Conference in March, 1988. Presentations publicizing the Hawaii Seminar will start with the 1988 fall semester. Mainland marketing will begin in October at the National Council for Staff, Program and Organizational Development Conference in Chicago and the California Academic Senate Conference (Los Angeles) in November. Presentations on the Hawaii Great Teachers Seminar will be made at the Los Angeles and Chicago meetings. During the early spring of 1989, flyers will be mailed to the Deans of Instruction of mainland and Pacific Basin community colleges. In addition, mailings will target the Faculty Senate Chairs of the California Community Colleges and members of the National Council for Staff, Program, and Organizational Development.

Ideally, the KMC Seminar will achieve immediate success because it starts with what seems to be the right ingredients. The marketing needs to show that the Hawaii Seminar will be every bit as good as currently existing Seminars. The marketing needs to reflect that the planning is sound, the commitment and support of the University of Hawaii Community College System are genuine, the professional staff, the site and the process have substance. The potential for a good mix of participants with an ethnically diverse and international flavor is real. The major thrust of the strategy calls for the larger campuses such as Honolulu, Kapiolani and Leeward to send two or three of its faculty and campuses such as Kauai, Windward, Maui, Hilo and the Employment Training Office to financially support one or two instructors. Early indications are that the West coast states such as California will also likely enroll a significant number of applicants. A cap will be imposed at around 40 registrants.

Basing the first Hawaii Seminar at KMC provides many appealing advantages. Aside from the beautiful surroundings of the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park which showcases volcanic activity, the proximity to numerous intriguing Hawaiian sites insures educationally stimulating field trips. A visit to the University of Hawaii's Mauna Kea Observatory and a tour of the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park Museum are two examples. Still another advantage is the willingness of the University of Hawaii at Hilo to provide moral, professional and technical assistance as needed. Several Hilo faculty and administrators have worked hard to encourage building the first Hawaii Seminar on the Big Island. The many hours and energy already contributed are proof of their pledge to construct an event that will last for many years.