

Program 60 History

While The Ohio State University President Harold L. Enarson, Ph.D., and his wife were visiting Colorado in 1973, he read an item in a Denver newspaper about a university program for people of retirement age. After requesting more information from the University of Denver, Dr. Enarson presented Program 65 to Ohio State's Board of Trustees. With the board's approval in December 1973, Associate Provost for Instruction George Crepeau, Ph.D., launched the program for senior citizens five days after the start of winter quarter on Jan. 8, 1974.

Program 65 was seen as an opportunity for older persons to continue significant learning experiences for free in selected courses wherever space was available. To participate, individuals were required to be 65 or older and residents of Ohio. Previous university attendance was not a prerequisite, and tests or exams were optional. Registration was handled through the Office of Continuing Education so participants were not officially admitted to the university and no credit hours would be given toward degrees. Finally, special identification cards were issued, and various parking and library privileges were accommodated. By the end of the first year, enrollment totalled 185 men and women in approximately 200 different courses.

Encouraged by the successes of Program 65 at Ohio State, the Ohio legislature passed Senate Bill 497 on April 29, 1976, requiring all state-supported colleges and universities to permit senior citizens age 60 or older to attend classes on a non-tuition, noncredit, space available basis. As a result, Dr. Enarson immediately lowered Ohio State's age requirement to 60 and the program name became Program 60.

Directed from the enthusiasm of many participants in Program 65 and then Program 60 toward creating an organization focused on social interaction and community service, the Program 60 Association formed. Members wrote bylaws in order to function in a businesslike manner, and in accordance with the final bylaws, pro tem officers served until an election could be held. Originally set at \$2 per year, dues later changed to the current \$3 annually. Today, association members volunteer at the Ohio State television and radio station fundraisers, usher at Ohio State graduations, contribute regularly to Ohio State's scholarship fund, etc. Many also participate in studies conducted by various university departments, including the College of Medicine.