

Milestones in the History of University of the People

University of the People was established in early 2009 to address the global need for accessible low-cost, high-quality online education.

- January 2009 – President Shai Reshef announced establishment of University of the People, the first ever non-profit, tuition-free, degree granting online university.
- April 2009 – University of the People began accepting applications for undergraduate study.
- May 2009 – The global announcement of the launch of UoPeople was hosted by The United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID) at UN headquarters in New York City.

During the 2009-10 academic year, UoPeople experienced important milestones in its worldwide recognition, including worldwide media attention.

- September 2009 – The University enrolled its first cohort of students who came from 49 countries around the world. It began with two degrees – Associate of Science and Bachelor of Science – and two majors – Business Administration and Computer Science.
- Fall 2009 – Partnership with Yale ISP – UoPeople and the Yale Law School Information Society Project (Yale ISP) formed a digital education research partnership to understand both the reach and the benefits of free online education resources.
- September 2010 - Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) in partnership with UoPeople, committed to provide full scholarships to 250 Haitians in support of that country's post-earthquake recovery efforts.

During the 2010-11 academic year, University of the People entered into a number of partnerships in support of its mission to open access to higher education to qualified individuals regardless of their economic, geographic, political or cultural circumstances.

- June 2011 - UoPeople began collaborating with New York University. The collaboration created the opportunity for UoPeople's top performing students, who have completed at least one year of study, to apply for admission and generous financial aid at NYU's prestigious and highly selective Abu Dhabi campus. The first UoPeople student began studying there in September 2012.

- June 2011 - As part of the HP Catalyst Initiative, Hewlett-Packard announced the creation of an internship program for UoPeople students to help prepare them for work in today's global economy. Through the partnership, HP generously committed to the sponsorship and mentorship of women worldwide, established Virtual Research Internships, created access to HP Life E-Learning, provided computers for the learning center in Haiti, and gave general support to help UoPeople achieve accreditation.

During the 2011-12 academic year, University of the People reached an important academic milestone.

- UoPeople awarded its first Associate of Science degrees.
- Through a generous contribution, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation joined UoPeople's efforts to open the gates to higher education. Through their grant, UoPeople succeeded in the pursuit of accreditation.
- During the 2012-13 academic year, the support to help advance UoPeople's mission and recognition continued, as did the University's academic excellence.
- UoPeople received support from Google, HP, Western Union, and others.

During the 2013-14 academic year, UoPeople achieved several important milestones, including accreditation, more graduates and further support.

- In February 2014 - UoPeople became accredited. The institution achieved its biggest milestone to date: the granting of accreditation by the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC).
- April 2014 – UoPeople awarded its first Bachelor of Science degrees. The graduates, seven in total, came from four different countries: Jordan, Nigeria, Syria and the United States.
- August 2014 – President Reshef's TED Talk at the 2014 TED Conference – one of the most prestigious conferences in the world. With over 3.8 million views to date, and translated into several languages, TED has uniquely spread the word about UoPeople and helped with much-relied on publicity to reach students and supporters around the globe.
- UoPeople was honored by the White House with an invitation for President Reshef to brief members of the White House's National Security Council (NCS). President Reshef's briefings (twice) focused on online education and how to use the internet as a vehicle for spreading US higher education throughout the world.

The 2014-15 academic year was one of growth, expansion, and special initiatives

- Fall 2015 – UoPeople announced its Emergency Refugee Initiative. In response to the crisis in Syria, UoPeople commits to accepting at least 500 refugees (mainly from Syria) with scholarships to pursue associate's and bachelor's degrees. UoPeople worked with its accrediting body, the DEAC, to develop a mechanism for accepting and enrolling refugee students even before requiring official documents and transcripts – one of the most common roadblocks for refugees in accessing higher education.

The 2015-16 academic year saw UoPeople continue its academic excellence.

- March 2016 – UoPeople launches world's first tuition-free, accredited online MBA.
- March 2016 – UoPeople launches Health Science program – with a major in Community and Public Health at the Associate's and Bachelor's Degree levels.
- April 2016 – University of California Berkeley (UC Berkeley) partners with UoPeople to accept applications from top qualified UoPeople Associate's degree graduates to transfer to complete a Bachelor's degree at Berkeley.
- Over 5,000 students from over 180 countries were admitted.

2017 academic year: We have now enrolled to date over 6,000 students and we expect growth to double with every year.