

# Diversity at Lambda School

The purpose of this annual report is to start a dialogue about how we plan to expand and support the diversity of the Lambda School community moving forward, and how we're working toward a more inclusive future.



# Our First Diversity Report

Lambda School was founded on the belief that while potential is evenly distributed across society, opportunity is not. Since we started in 2017, our mission has been to close the gap between potential and opportunity by removing barriers that stand in the way of a better education, a better career, and a higher income. All of our operations – from the way we teach our courses to the way we help students finance their education – have been designed to prioritize accessibility and to align our success with the success of our students.

We are still a young and growing company, and this is our first Diversity Report. We know we have a lot to learn, and we believe the best way to make progress is to put stakes in the ground that will enable us and our community to measure our performance over time. This report includes data and demographics on both our students and staff. Though we may not always release these data sets together, we are using this initial report to paint a comprehensive initial picture of Lambda School. And, as the following pages reveal, the data suggests two important conclusions. First, that our accessible educational model effectively opens doors for underrepresented and underserved groups eager to work in the tech sector. For these groups, Lambda can be an important engine for economic mobility and for overcoming systemic barriers that have traditionally stood in the way of upward mobility. Second, the staff of our school does not yet reflect the diversity of our student body.

To collect student demographic data, we surveyed our current student population, and received 2069 responses, which represent 73% of our current students as of July 9, 2020. Staff demographic data represents 163 employees as of June 25, 2020, and was aggregated by standard methods used by companies to collect and report on staff. We rely

on employees to self-identify their demographics using our people management software, and as a result, the staff data we obtained is less robust than the student demographic data. We have explained the data collection methods for both populations in the “Methodology” section below.

The purpose of this report is to establish a baseline understanding about our students and staff in order to start a dialogue about what we’ve learned and how we plan to support diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts ongoing.

## Learning from our students: Lambda School student demographics

Our students are the lifeblood of Lambda School. Because our programs primarily focus on training students to work as web developers and data scientists at technology companies, we first compared our student demographics relative to the tech industry. The data makes clear that **training programs like Lambda School can significantly diversify hiring pipelines in an industry that has systematically failed to make progress on diversity.**

This is a big deal, since the **lack of a candidate “pipeline”** is often used as an excuse to justify the lack of diversity in the tech sector. In a comprehensive **2015 study**, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) found that compared to private industry as a whole, the tech sector employed a smaller percentage of Black/African American individuals (14.7% industry to 7.4% tech), Hispanic/LatinX individuals (13.8% industry to 8% tech), and women (48% industry to 36% tech). **A recent report by Bloomberg confirms** that almost no progress has been made in the last five years since EEOC’s study.

Most of this data reflects the total employment of technology company staff, meaning that the statistics for technical roles (eg. product, engineering, design) are almost always lower when published in greater detail. Our strong belief is that Lambda School students can have a positive effect on the industry in many ways, including bringing high-quality, diverse talent to our hiring partners.

According to our findings, 33.7% of Lambda School students identify as

Underrepresented Minorities (URM)\*, with 12.7% identifying as Black or African American, and 11.9% identifying as Hispanic or LatinX. Female students at Lambda School are slightly underrepresented relative to the tech industry as a whole (25.1% of our students identify as cisgender female, and 4.4% identify as transgender, non-binary, or two or more gender identities; the industry benchmark for women at technology companies is closer to 36%). Given Lambda students end up in technical roles, this disparity may be overstated. Regardless, we plan to continue to improve upon these numbers over time.

Lambda's student body also appears more diverse than other high-quality institutions that bring talent to the tech industry, including 4-year computer science programs. According to [2017 data by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System \(IPEDS\)](#), the percentage of Computer Science degrees awarded to African American/Black students was 3.1% while Hispanic/LatinX students was 6.9%. In addition, IPEDS estimates that ~22% of top CS program graduates are female.

Overall, one of the most important takeaways from the demographic data of our student body is that **removing barriers to access for education and training naturally creates a more diverse student body in virtually every respect – one that begins to closely mirror the demographics of the United States.**

For example, according to [2019 Census data](#), Underrepresented Minorities comprise 36.2% of the United States population, and as we mentioned above, the percentage at Lambda is 33.7%. 7-8% of people nationwide are active military or veterans, which is close to Lambda's 6.43%. Though the data is under-reported nationally, [studies suggest that 4.5% of Americans identify as LGBTQ+](#), and at Lambda School, that number is 18%.

Our other key conclusion from the student data is that **the founding premise of Lambda School holds true – that making skills-focused training and education more widely accessible will create an engine for economic mobility.**

Prior to entering Lambda, nearly 70% of our students were making less than \$50,000 per year, and nearly one-third were making less than \$25,000. In contrast, according to our most recent Outcomes Report, 85% of students are now making more \$50,000, 20% are making more than \$100,000, and the median salary is \$70,000. This suggests that the structure of Lambda School's model provides a tangible opportunity for

economic mobility.

In addition, almost half of students (48.76%) had no college degree or professional accreditation before enrolling in Lambda School, and more than half (55.82%) were working jobs that paid hourly. The average age of a Lambda student is 32, signaling that, for many, Lambda School provides the opportunity to shift the trajectory of their career away from a low paying career and into a higher-paying industry.

## Holding up a mirror: Lambda School

Lambda School's employee demographics look much like those of the technology industry, but this isn't good enough. As a relatively young company and new employer, we need to hold ourselves to a higher standard. Moreover, we support a very diverse student body, and we must work to ensure that our internal demographics mirror those of our student body. We started deliberately focusing on building a more diverse team this year, but we still have a long way to go. These gaps are particularly pronounced among our leadership team (currently defined as VP or above, though this may change as our company grows) and in the lack of underrepresented technical talent inside our company, areas that we are committed to addressing.

42.3% of Lambda School staff identify as female. On our technical team, that number is 20.7%. In management, we have 39.5% female managers and 33.3% of our leadership team is female. 12.9% of Lambda School staff members identify as underrepresented minorities. On our technical teams that number drops to 3.5%, and in management, it is 5.3%. We currently have no employees who identify as underrepresented minorities on our leadership team. We recognize that this performance is not consistent with our goals, particularly given the makeup of our student population, and we are committed to addressing this.

We have made meaningful progress improving the racial diversity of our staff since January 2020. In total, 22.5% of new staff identify as underrepresented minorities – 16.1% identify as Black or African American, 3.2% identify as Hispanic or LatinX, and 9.7% identify as two or more races. We believe this is as a direct result of adopting a “Diverse Slate” approach to hiring for all roles. This approach focuses attention and effort on sourcing for underrepresented minorities (and women in

technical roles) to ensure that we interview a diverse set of candidates for every role we hire for at Lambda. We will continue to take this approach for all future hiring at Lambda School including any open leadership positions.

We also recognize that it is not enough to hire a diverse workforce. It is equally important for Lambda School to foster an inclusive culture where team members feel seen, heard, and welcomed in order to retain diverse talent. We have launched several initiatives at Lambda to this end and have added specific questions on the topic to our bi-annual company engagement survey to measure our progress.

These initiatives include:

1. A cross-functional Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (DIB)/Allies group charged with scoping and implementing programs to enhance diversity and inclusion at the organization;
2. Online certification training for Anti-Harassment, Managing Bias, and Diversity and Inclusion; and
3. An upcoming launch of instructor-led workshops on the above topics in partnership with [ReadySet](#), a noted vendor in the DE&I space.

Advocating for a diverse and inclusive community also extends beyond our curriculum and admissions processes. Lambda School has built partnerships with organizations like [Lesbians Who Tech](#) to provide scholarships to LGBTQ+ women and non binary individuals, [The Mom Project](#) to help more mothers and caregivers break into tech, and [Modern Health](#) to provide mental health benefits to students and staff.

We view these recruiting, retention, and support initiatives above as continuous work and as a key strategic component for ensuring Lambda School can serve its students and stakeholders with empathy, awareness, and efficacy.

## Looking forward

The diversity of our student body is the natural by-product of a model that makes education more accessible for students of all backgrounds. By breaking down some of the barriers that have prevented many underrepresented and underserved communities from realizing their

potential, this initial demographic data suggests that Lambda can help reduce the gap between potential and opportunity.

We are convinced that our student demographics can mirror or exceed those of the United States, and this is our goal. We have work to do to get there, and we are very aware that actions speak louder than words, so expect to see concrete progress from us in the coming months.

We are also committing now to start tracking how students from different demographics progress at Lambda, including working to ensure that all students we admit have a fair and equal opportunity to be successful at Lambda, regardless of circumstance or background.

We have several efforts underway to deepen and expand inclusion and support for our diverse community of students. In addition to implementing instructor-led DE&I training, we are also reviewing the student experience, including reviewing our policies and processes, to ensure our learning environment reflects an inclusive culture. In the coming months, we will also launch student affinity groups to provide spaces for students with shared identities to build community, and we will be rolling out additional opportunities for students to engage in training and related initiatives around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Just as we are committed to reporting regularly on the [Outcomes](#) of Lambda School, we're committed to consistent transparency and accountability around diversity. We plan to release this data annually, along with the lessons we've learned and updates on how we're working to make Lambda School a more inclusive, equitable place to work and learn. As always, we appreciate your support.

# Lambda School By the Numbers

The survey included many options for self-identification, leading to a long tail of answers. In order to visually showcase the data below, we've grouped some responses together here.

Lambda School has students from all across the United States who bring a broad range of experiences to our community. Next is a look at the demographics of our current student body.

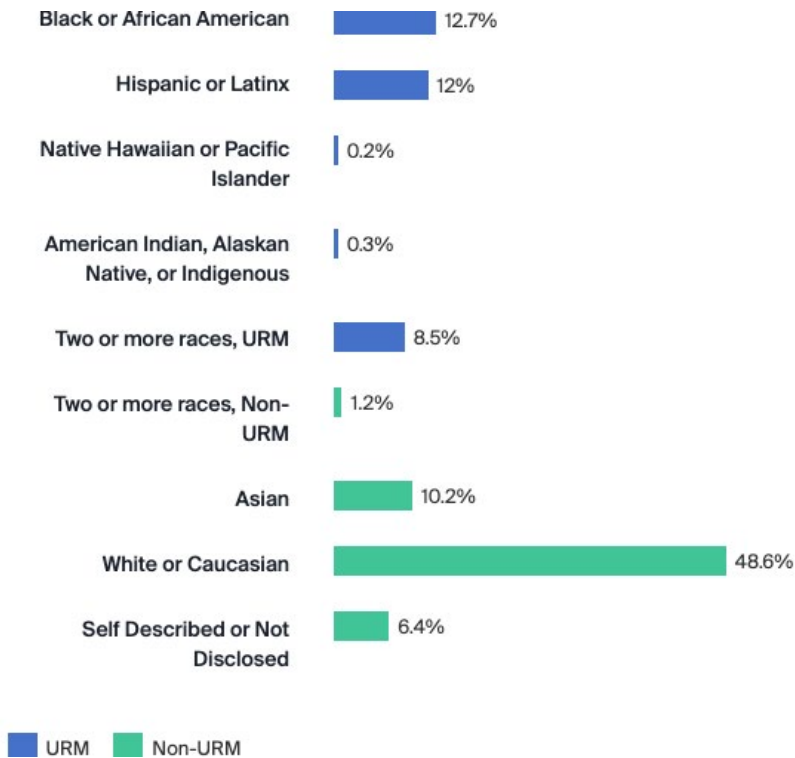




# Lambda Student Body

## RACE

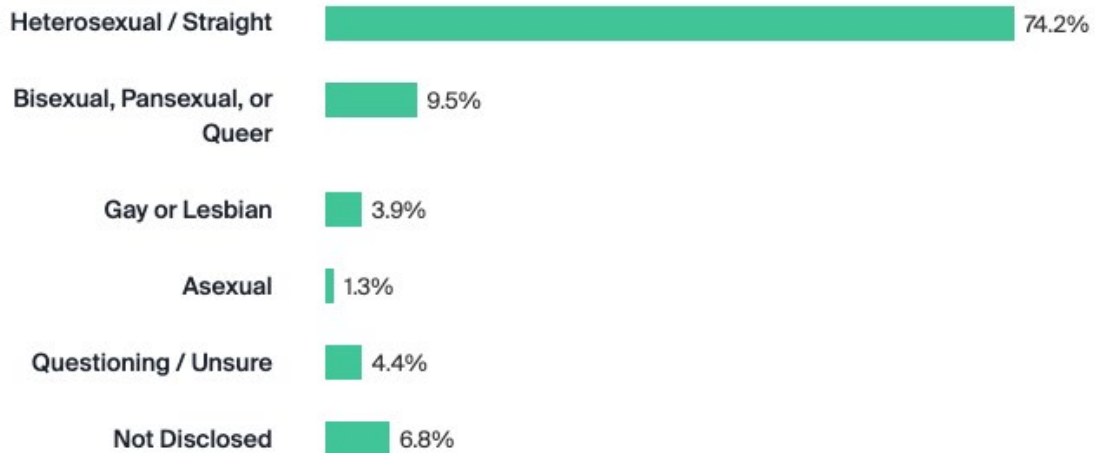
**33.7%** underrepresented minorities.



## SEXUALITY

# 18.0%

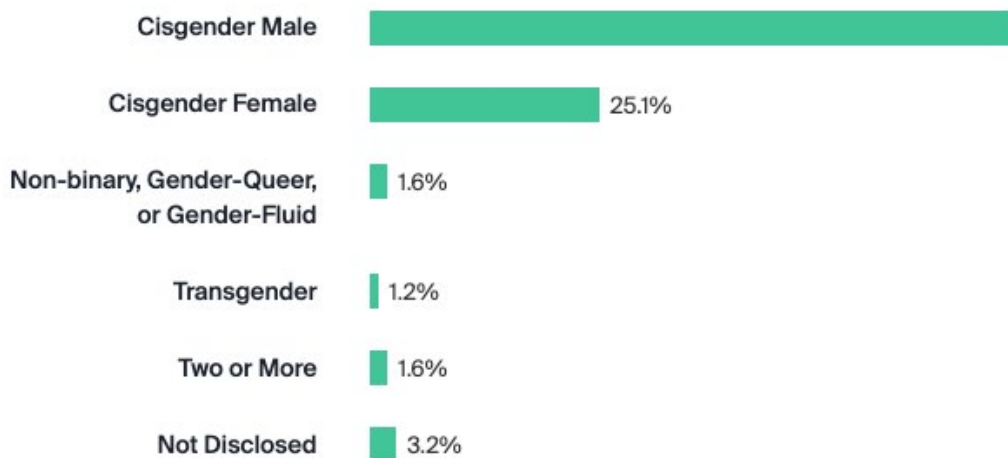
of reporting Lambda students identify as LGBTQ+



## GENDER

# 4.4%

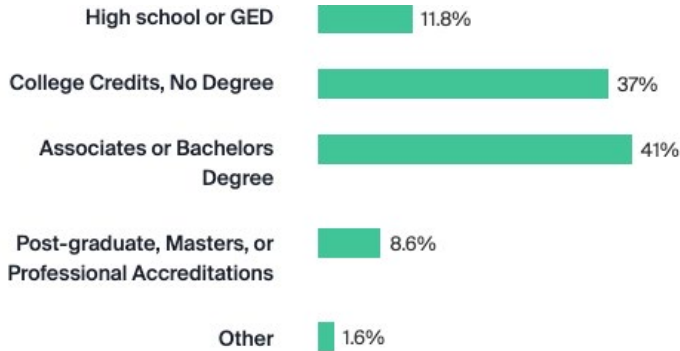
of Lambda students identify as Transgender, Non-binary, Gender-Queer, Gender-Fluid, or Two or more gender identities.



## PREVIOUS EDUCATION LEVEL

# 48.8%

Nearly half of all students had no college degree or professional accreditation prior to enrolling in Lambda School.



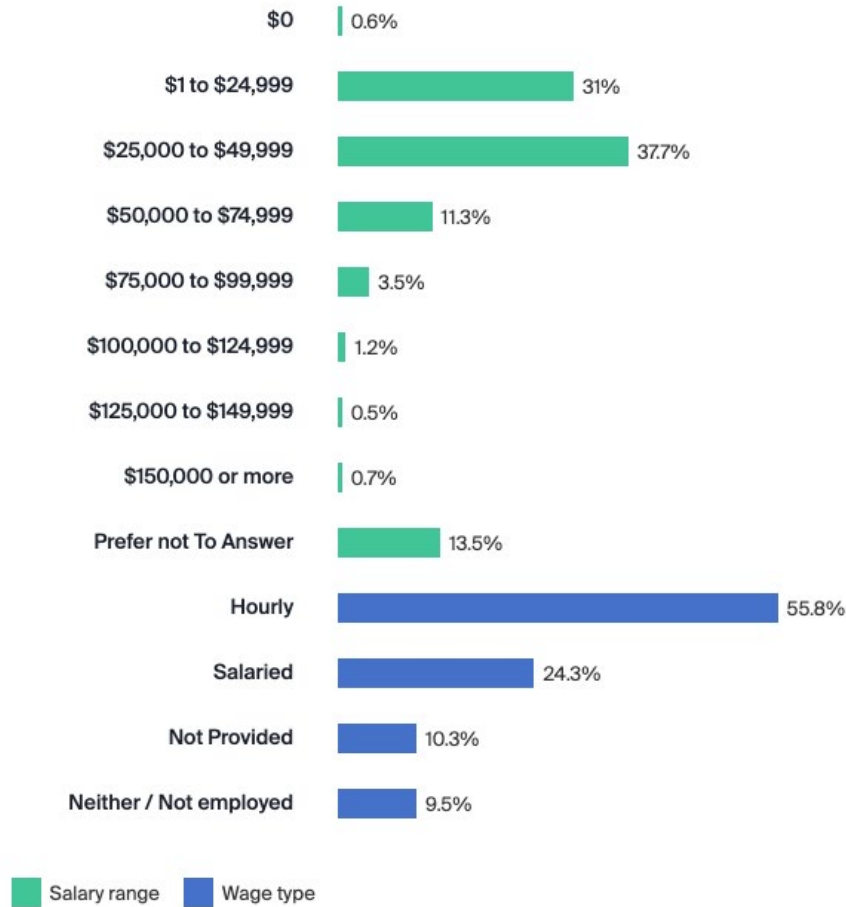
## PREVIOUS SALARY

# 69.3%

Approximately 69% of our student body making under \$50k a year, and one-third (32%) under \$25k prior to enrolling in Lambda School.

# 55.8%

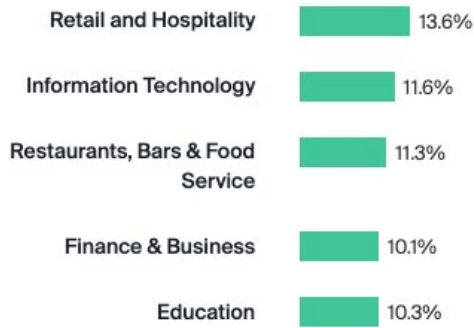
More than half of our students were earning an hourly wage prior to joining Lambda School.



## PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

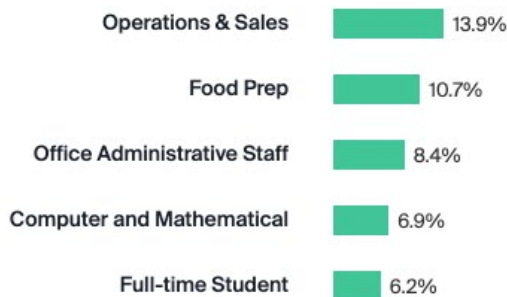
**6.4%** of Lambda School students are veterans or active military.

**88%** of Lambda School students are pivoting into tech from another industry.



25%

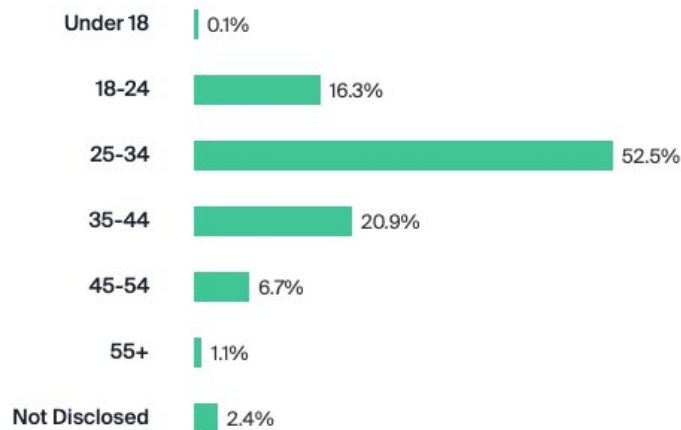
of students worked in sales or food preparation prior to enrolling in Lambda School.



AGE DEMOGRAPHICS

32

The average age of a Lambda School student is 32 and the median age is 30.



MENTAL HEALTH

**31.5%**

of the Lambda School student body report experiencing mental health challenges.

CHILD CARE OR ADULT CARE RESPONSIBILITIES

**28.9%**

of students have either child care or adult care responsibilities at home.

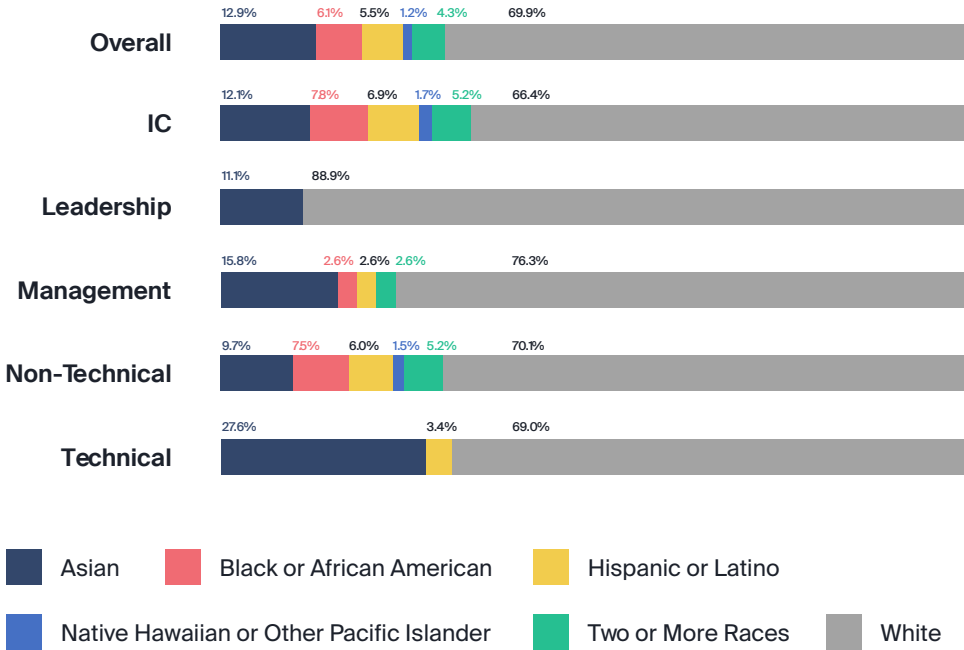
LEARNING OR PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

**16.2%**

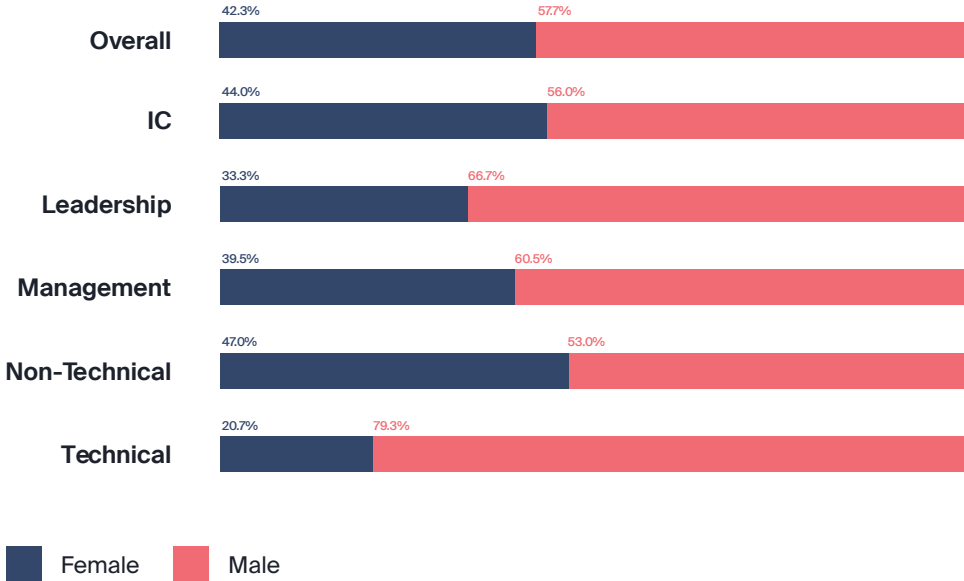
of Lambda students identify as having either a learning disability or a physical disability.

# Lambda School Staff

## RACE

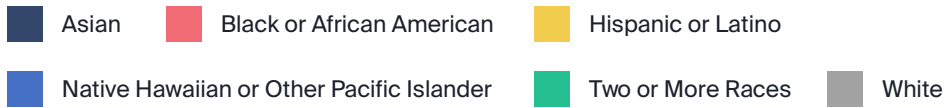
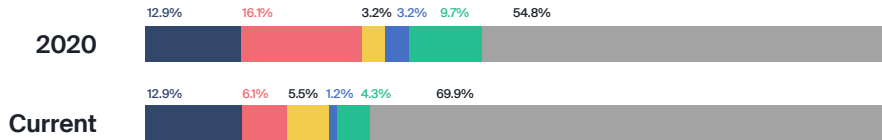


## GENDER

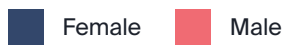
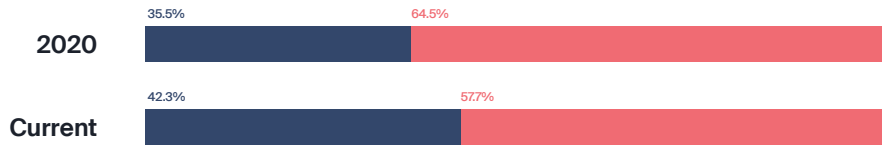


# Staff Growth

## RACE



## GENDER





# Methodology

For clarity, we're including a few definitions of terms used in the report above.

## Student Data

The student data was collected from a survey sent out to all current students of Lambda School on June 8th 2020. 2069 people responded (73% response rate) over 1 month. The questions were multiple choice in which multiple answers could be chosen and written responses were welcomed as well.

The language that we use and the categories offered in questions on gender and sexual identity come from the best practices and guidelines of [The Consortium of Higher Education LGBTQ Resource Professionals](#) and [The Human Rights Campaign Guidelines](#), both known for their strong community advocacy. Language on ethnicity follows the terminology recommended by the [National Center For Education Statistics](#).

**Gender Identity:** If an individual selected two or more gender identities, they were included in the “Two or More” category. Null responses, nondisclosures, and self-descriptions were categorized as “Not Disclosed.”

**Sexual Orientation:** “Gay,” “Lesbian” responses were grouped into the “Gay or Lesbian” category. “Bisexual,” “Pansexual,” and “Queer” were included in the “Bisexual, Pansexual or Queer” category. If a student selected more than one option or “Questioning or unsure,” they were included in the “Questioning or unsure” category. Null responses and

nondisclosures were categorized as “Not disclosed.”

**\*Underrepresented minority (URM):** To report on the underrepresented minority category, we utilized guidelines from the EEOC and the NSF. We used the NSF’s breakdown of the labor market particular to science and engineering fields to define this group. In our report, “Underrepresented Minority” includes:

- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Hispanic or LatinX
- American Indian, Alaskan Native or Indigenous
- Two or More Races - URM

**Two or more races - URM:** Students were included in the “Two or More Races – URM” category when one of the selected races falls into an aforementioned URM category. 176 students have identified as multiple races with one of those races being URM, 24 students have identified as multiple races with none of those races chosen being URM.

### Staff Data

Staff demographic data represents 163 employees as of June 25, 2020, and was collected via self-identification in Lambda School’s people management software. Because of this, the data we collected for staff this year is much more limited compared to the student data.

**Leadership team:** This is currently defined as VP or above, though this may change as our company grows.

**Underrepresented minority:** Similar to our student data, we used the NSF’s breakdown of the labor market particular to science and engineering fields to define this group, with one exception. Our staff data is not as granular as our student data, so we’re not able to parse out those who identify as “Two or More Races” into URM or non-URM subgroups. As a result, we chose to exclude all those who identify as “Two or More Races” in our calculation of underrepresented minorities.

**Technical:** In this breakdown of staff data, technical roles include those in engineering, product, and product design.

**Non-Technical:** This includes all roles not in engineering, product, or product design.

# Addendum

H1 2019 Outcomes Report