A NOTE FROM THE FOUNDER

“We are on a mission to build the most inclusive, human-centric education company on earth. CareerFoundry is a place where everyone belongs.”

Five years ago, my co-founder Raffaela Rein and I started CareerFoundry. Back then, we were two bright-eyed entrepreneurs with a big dream. Today, we’re a family of 40 employees, 200 mentors and tutors, and thousands of students and alumni all over the globe.

We want to help anyone, regardless of background, to build a career they love. We believe that anyone with enough determination and drive can learn to master tech skills, and we have proven that it’s true: we don’t employ a rigorous selection process to determine who does and who doesn’t get to take a CareerFoundry course, and yet we have some of the highest completion rates in the industry. This, combined with the fact that our courses are some of the most affordable on the market, has endowed us with a very diverse student community. For 2019 we have set ourselves the goal of ensuring our team of employees, mentors, and tutors are as diverse as our student community: An inclusive club that meets the needs of its members, and that we are all proud to be part of.

Martin Ramsin
CEO & Founder of CareerFoundry
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Diversity, belonging, and the CareerFoundry mission

Here at CareerFoundry, we’ve been working a lot lately on our company mission and vision. We’ve just celebrated our 5th birthday and, as we grow and expand, it’s important to think about who we are now and who we want to become. Our core mission is to help anyone build a career they love—regardless of their background. Our vision is to become the most human-centric education company on earth.

So how do we get there?

Diversity has become a major talking point in the office—and a top priority on a strategic level. We realize that, if we are to truly become the inclusive, innovative, empathetic community that we envision, we must place diversity at the heart of what we do.

Why?

In order to adequately meet the needs of our student body, we must reflect and represent its diversity internally. We need to leverage the power of a diverse team who can speak from different perspectives and experiences; only then are we in a position to innovate and trailblaze in the world of online education. Quite simply, we need diversity to be better at what we do.

How do we define diversity?

Diversity is like an onion, with multiple layers and levels. It’s highly nuanced—not just a box you can tick once you’ve achieved what looks like diversity on a superficial level. At CareerFoundry, we define diversity not as a fixed end goal, but rather, an ongoing mission.

For us, diversity means representing, respecting and celebrating people from all walks of life. It’s about creating a place of inclusion and belonging for everyone, regardless of their interests, backgrounds, and experiences. We’re striving to understand and embrace diversity on all levels—not just those that are immediately visible. We aspire to be as diverse and inclusive as possible in terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, physical and cognitive ability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic background.

We want our definition of diversity to permeate and drive every single aspect of the CareerFoundry experience—from our students and the expert mentors and tutors who guide them, right through to our internal team and the courses we offer.
What are we currently doing to promote and celebrate diversity at CareerFoundry?

As a relatively young startup, we don’t have the same degree of established processes and protocols as some of the older companies in our field. However, we do take our culture very seriously, and diversity is a huge part of that.

In the midst of steady growth, we’re taking steps to formalize our diversity initiatives and get everybody in the business on board. With the help of our in-house Diversity Committee, we’re working to raise awareness of what diversity means and why it’s important; to make structural improvements that foster diversity and inclusion; to identify the challenges we face as a company; and to devise an ongoing plan of action.

Some of our most recent areas of focus include making the hiring process as inclusive as possible, conducting internal training sessions on the definition and importance of diversity, ensuring that all marketing and communications material is inclusive and diverse in terms of wording and imagery, and, as the basis of this report, conducting anonymous surveys in order to learn more about the diversity of our students, employees, mentors and tutors. You can learn more about our diversity initiatives in the Challenges, Goals & Objectives section towards the end of this report.

What will we cover in our 2019 Diversity & Inclusion Report?

Our first ever Diversity & Inclusion Report marks a small but significant step in our mission to becoming a more diverse, more inclusive, and all-round better CareerFoundry—for our students, mentors and tutors, as well as our employees.

In order to better understand the current CareerFoundry community, we surveyed our students, our mentors and tutors, and our employees (including freelancers). In this report, we’ll present our findings based on 306 student responses, 53 mentor and tutor responses, and 39 employee responses. The primary focus of this report is on our student body: we want to understand who our customers are. We’ll also explore whether our internal team and pool of mentors and tutors reflect the diversity of our student body, and discuss how our findings compare to the wider tech industry. To wrap up, we’ll identify the key challenges we’re facing when it comes to diversity, and consider how we might overcome them in 2019 and beyond.

So, what were the results of our diversity survey? Let’s find out.
Where are our students from?

We’ve got students on almost every continent, with the majority hailing from the USA (51.91%) and Europe (28.88%). We also have a small proportion of students in Canada, India, Singapore, Mexico, Australia, South America, South Africa, Namibia and New Zealand.

When enrolling on a CareerFoundry course, each student is assigned both a dedicated expert mentor and a tutor; you can learn about our mentor model [here](#). We aim to pair our students with experts in the same time zone in order to facilitate timely communication, so the geographical distribution of our mentors and tutors closely reflects this. Most of our mentors and tutors are based in the USA—we’ve got experts from coast to coast. We’ve also got mentors and tutors throughout Europe, as well as in Canada, Singapore, Malta and Argentina, to name just a handful of examples.

CareerFoundry is based in Berlin, Germany, with a remote sales team located mostly in the USA. Given that our courses are provided in English, and English is the lingua franca when communicating with students, mentors, tutors, and with each other in-house, most of our employees come from the USA, Europe, and the UK. We also have employees from Africa, South Asia, South America, Australia and Russia.
What ethnicity are our students?
The majority of our students define their ethnicity as Caucasian. The second largest ethnic group represented by our student body is East Asian / South Asian / Pacific Islander, followed by mixed/multiple ethnic groups. Our students also identify as Hispanic or Latin American, Black / African / Caribbean, Middle Eastern or Arab, and Native American. 4.23% of students surveyed describe their ethnicity as “other”, and 8 students (2.61%) preferred not to respond.

What ethnicity are our mentors & tutors?
The survey responses from our mentors and tutors paint a fairly similar picture. The majority of our mentors and tutors also identify as Caucasian (36.36%), followed by Hispanic or Latin American (15.91%), East Asian / South Asian / Pacific Islander (13.64%), Middle Eastern or Arab (9.09%), mixed / multiple ethnic groups (9.09%), and Black / African / Caribbean (4.55%). Unlike our students, none of our mentors or tutors define their ethnicity as Native American. 6.82% of our mentors and tutors identify as “other”, and 2 of the survey participants (4.55%) preferred not to respond.

What ethnicity are CareerFoundry employees?
Of the 39 CareerFoundry employees who took part in the survey, the large majority (84.62%) are Caucasian. Our employees also identify as Hispanic or Latin American, Black / African / Caribbean, East Asian / South Asian / Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern or Arab, mixed / multiple ethnic groups, and “other”—with 1 employee (2.56%) in each of these ethnic groups. No CareerFoundry employees identify as Native American.
Ethnic diversity in the tech industry

Based on the global employee data of several leading tech firms, a Diversity In Tech report presented by Information is Beautiful explores how various ethnic groups are represented across each company—including the likes of Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Instagram, Google, LinkedIn and YouTube.

In all companies apart from one, the majority of employees identify as white / Caucasian. In most cases, the second largest ethnic group represented in tech is Asian, followed by Hispanic / Latin American, black, multiple ethnic groups, and “other”.

Another report focusing on 177 of the largest tech companies in Silicon Valley found that, in 2016, 73.2% of all executives and senior managers in these firms were white, 21% were Asian, 3% were Latin American, and 1.4% were black.

The takeaway

- Ethnic minorities remain underrepresented in the tech sector.
- The CareerFoundry student body is made up of a diverse range of ethnic groups, as is our community of mentors and tutors.
- CareerFoundry employees are predominantly Caucasian, signalling a need for internal diversity that more closely reflects the ethnic diversity of our students.
GENDER IDENTITY

How do our students self-identify in terms of gender?

50% of students taking our Web Development Course identify as women, with the remaining 50% identifying as men. On our UX and UI Design Courses, 67% of survey respondents identify as women, while 33% identify as men. With women significantly underrepresented in the tech sector, we are delighted to see our students breaking the mold.

Our mentor and tutor survey also reported a fairly even gender split, with 52.27% identifying as men and 47.73% as women. Here at CareerFoundry, our employees are 64% self-identifying women and 36% self-identifying men. Of all mentors, tutors, and employees who completed the survey, none identified as “other”.

How do our mentors, tutors, & employees self-identify in terms of gender?

Gender diversity in the tech industry

Women continue to be underrepresented in the tech industry. Only 28% of proprietary software jobs and 25% of IT jobs are held by women. Time and time again, we hear of the staggering lack of diversity in tech leadership.

The tech industry is supposed to be synonymous with innovation, yet the statistics continue to depict a man’s world. At CareerFoundry, this is a reality we really want to change; not only by encouraging women to learn in-demand tech skills, but also by hiring more women for tech-related roles. While we’re on the right track with the former, the latter is proving significantly more difficult.

Our in-house development team currently consists of five men, so gender diversity is at the top of our list when it comes to new hires. Most recently, we were looking for a junior frontend developer and a senior Ruby on Rails developer, and hoped this would be an opportunity to bring some women on board. We advertised on StackOverflow and Angellist, and worked with recruiters to source suitable candidates. Our developers also personally sourced and contacted candidates across a range of industry platforms. In all, we received around 1 woman applicant out of 100.
When it came to actively sourcing candidates, the percentage of women with searchable profiles was even lower. After interviewing a handful of candidates, we did offer the job to a woman. Unfortunately, she turned us down.

Our survey results tell us that women are learning web development skills, so why are we struggling to break the gender stereotype in-house? As a company, we are now considering how we can learn from this experience to develop a more effective approach. We need to redouble our efforts in terms of attracting women programmers (we know they’re out there!), and also make sure that CareerFoundry is a place they want to work.

The takeaway

- At CareerFoundry, we can be proud of a fairly even gender distribution across the board: Self-identifying women make up the majority of our student body and our CareerFoundry employees, and we’ve almost achieved a 50/50 gender split in our mentor and tutor community.

- Here at CareerFoundry, two of our three directors are women. Seven out of twelve team leads are also women. However, women are underrepresented in the wider tech industry, especially in positions of leadership.

- Women are learning in-demand tech skills, so companies (us included) must focus on hiring more women for tech-related jobs, such as programming and development.
How do our students identify in terms of sexual orientation?

The majority of students who participated in the survey identify as heterosexual. 8.55% identify as gay/lesbian, and 5.59% identify as bisexual. A small percentage identify as “other”, and 7.24% preferred not to respond.

How do our mentors, tutors, & employees self-identify in terms of sexual orientation?

86.36% of mentors and tutors surveyed identify as heterosexual. 2.27% identify as bisexual. None identify as gay/lesbian, and 11.36% preferred not to respond. Of the 39 CareerFoundry employees who completed the survey, 74.36% identify as heterosexual. Three employees (7.69%) identify as gay/lesbian, and four (10.26%) identify as bisexual. Three employees (7.69%) preferred not to respond.

According to a report by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 46% of LGBTQ workers say they are closeted at work. When it comes to sexual orientation and gender identity, a fair question would be “Why does it even matter?” In other words, why is it anyone’s business?
Technically, it isn’t. However, when you consider that nearly every workplace demands some level of sharing—and that this sharing plays a crucial part in fostering trust and rapport amongst co-workers—it’s important that everyone feels able to talk about their personal lives as much, or as little, as they’d like. One of the main reasons cited by LGBTQ people for remaining closeted at work is based on their observations or feelings that their co-workers would be uncomfortable, or less accepting. No one should feel obliged to declare or discuss their gender identity and sexual orientation—but they should feel that they can if they want to. LGBTQ employees should be able to benefit from social interactions in the workplace as much as their non-LGBTQ peers.

At CareerFoundry, we strive to create a workplace that feels completely safe and inclusive. We are pleased to see that the majority of our survey participants felt comfortable disclosing their sexual identity.

The LGBTQ community in the tech industry

LGBTQ youth are three times more likely to be harassed online than their non-LGBTQ peers. Just like AI can be inherently sexist and racist, there have also been instances where certain algorithms have behaved discriminatorily towards LGBTQ users. Transgender YouTuber Chase Ross, for example, reports that some of his videos have been automatically demonetized by an algorithm detecting the word “trans”. Back in 2015, there were reports that the Russian Siri was homophobic, and more recently, that Google’s Sentiment Analyzer deems statements about being gay as negative. Such cases highlight just how crucial it is for technology companies to both hire inclusively, and to design and build products and algorithms that are free from bias.

As part of our diversity initiative, we are working in partnership with Lesbians Who Tech—a community of queer women in and around the tech industry. As part of the Edie Windsor coding scholarship, we offer a 30% discount to LGBTQ women, non-binary and transgender people looking to kick-start their career in technology. In 2018, we offered ten such scholarships, and we are currently in the process of renewing our partnership for 2019.
The takeaway

• Creating a safe, inclusive workplace is a crucial part of any diversity initiative. As an employer, it is important to be aware of the challenges that LGBTQ employees may face, and to nurture an environment in which everybody feels able to express themselves.

• As for the wider tech industry, representation is absolutely crucial at all levels. We have seen how a lack of diversity in design can lead to bias in the products around us, and this is something that tech giants especially must address.

• At CareerFoundry, we will continue to work with organizations such as Lesbians Who Tech in order to encourage as much diversity as possible in the industry.
What is the educational background of our students?

Our mission is to help anyone build a career they love, regardless of their background. Our courses have been designed for career-change, and we don't set any educational prerequisites: CareerFoundry is open to everyone, regardless of prior qualifications or achievements.

Despite this, over 55% of our students have a Bachelor's degree, and almost 30% have a Master's. 4.86% completed secondary education before taking a CareerFoundry course, while 0.35% of our students completed no schooling whatsoever.

This data is reflected in the personal stories of our grads. Most of our students come to CareerFoundry to change careers, having already pursued a particular field of study or a certain career path and realized it's not for them. Kristis, for example, studied automobile transport engineering before deciding to learn web development. After completing her Master's in business administration and working as a management consultant, Garance came to CareerFoundry to learn UI design. Then there's Andrada, who studied film and TV before venturing into UX.
While the concept of e-learning is nothing new, online courses aren’t typically seen as the go-to option when it comes to forging a new career path. There are plenty of online courses available, but only a few providers currently offer comprehensive “full-service” programs that not only actively support and guide learners through a curriculum, but are also structurally invested in helping graduates gain employment. Indeed, the very concept of a job guarantee attached to the successful completion of a course is often met with surprise.

Here at CareerFoundry, we find that most of our students have already undertaken some form of independent study, and are perhaps more aware of—and open to—online learning as a result. The question we must ask ourselves now is how we can make our courses more accessible and appealing to first-time students; how do we open up our community to those who haven’t studied before, or who have perhaps had negative experiences with educational institutions in the past?

As the e-learning sector matures, it’s important to emphasize that comprehensive, high-quality online courses are a viable route to forging a career. Employers and hiring managers think so too: A survey conducted by job board Indeed.com found that 72% of employers think that bootcamp grads are just as prepared to be high performers as degree holders. 12% of employers think that bootcamp grads are more prepared and more likely to be high performers than candidates with computer science degrees.
WORK EXPERIENCE

### Related Experience
- Graphic design
- Research analytics
- Illustration
- Psychology
- Marketing
- Social media management
- Sales
- IT sales
- Technical author
- Technical support
- Systems analytics
- Database administration
- Software engineering
- Graphic Design

### Unrelated Experience
- Retail management
- Office administration
- Music
- Banking
- Translation
- Healthcare
- Teaching

Another common misconception among prospective students is that it’s not possible to learn UX/UI design or web development from scratch. As our survey results show, this is simply not true. While 44% of our students had some kind of relevant experience before taking their chosen course, 56% had none at all.

We’ve seen people with all kinds of professional background successfully retrain—and get hired—as web developers, UX and UI designers. In fact, we’ve frequently employed our own graduates, including a web development graduate who has gone on to lead our in-house team of developers. The fact that almost half of our student body enters the field with no prior experience is testament to how comprehensive our programs are. With hands-on exercises and portfolio projects, one-to-one guidance from expert mentors and tutors, and tailor-made job coaching, we ensure that our students have everything they need to change careers—regardless of their previous career path.
How old are our students?

The majority of our students (51%) are aged between 25 and 34, with 34% of our students falling between the 35-44 age bracket. We also have a small percentage of students aged between 18-24 (7%) and 45-54 (7%). 1% of respondents fall into the 55-64 age range. It’s worth noting that, while these groups only constitute a small percentage, if we extrapolate them across our entire student and graduate base, these minorities measure in the hundreds.

Our survey results seem to be in step with the wider bootcamp industry. According to a 2018 report by SwitchUp, the average coding bootcamp student is 30.6 years old. Education Today found that the average age of online learners is 34, based on data from 56 million e-learning students.

Most of our students are indeed career-changers, having already completed higher education and obtained some professional experience. For those 25-and-overs who have already pursued some form of traditional education and spent some time in the labour market, online courses are often considered the most practical approach to learning new skills and eventually changing careers. Above all, online courses are extremely flexible and can be fit around other responsibilities—be it family commitments, caring responsibilities, and/or earning a full-time income while studying.

Although the majority of our students are aged 44 and under, we want to emphasize that it’s never too late to learn new skills or make a career change. 87% of U.S. adults aged between 50-64 are using the internet, as are 66% of those aged 65 and over; thus, as an e-learning provider, we must ensure we’re able to cater to these users. In particular, it’s important to consider and address potential barriers that may prevent older learners from accessing, and benefiting from, our products. We’ll talk more about the accessibility of our course content in the Challenges, Goals & Objectives section.
PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENTS

The majority of students who completed the survey are taking the course alongside other professional commitments. 44% are in full-time employment, 22% are working freelance or self-employed, and 7% are in part-time employment.

One of the big advantages of online courses is the flexibility they offer, allowing students to work and study simultaneously. Flexibility is not only convenient; it’s crucial when it comes to inclusivity. We want to empower people to learn new skills without having to give up their jobs. Above all, we want our courses to be accessible for everyone—including those with a demanding work schedule, full-time caring responsibilities, or both.

Here at CareerFoundry, we recognize the challenges of being an adult learner and continuously seek to address them. One of the biggest challenges that our students face is time management, so we are currently focusing on how we can help our students to stay on-track. Just one example of the initiatives we have undertaken recently is a time management workshop we conducted with a group of local students. We are now using our findings from this session to rethink certain aspects of the course—such as how the student’s weekly progress is displayed, for example. Regular check-ins with a dedicated student advisor, ongoing feedback from an expert mentor and tutor, as well as a supportive community of fellow online learners are just some of the measures already in place to guide our students successfully towards the finish line.
THE WRAP-UP: CHALLENGES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Now we have a much better idea of who our students are, it’s time to reflect on what we’ve learned and, most importantly, to turn these learnings into actionable initiatives.

Overall, our student body is relatively diverse in terms of ethnicity, with an even gender split for web development and a majority of self-identifying women for design. Most of our students have completed some form of higher education prior to CareerFoundry, and just over half started their chosen course with no previous vocational experience in the field. The majority of our students are aged between 25 and 44, and most are in full-time employment while studying. Much like our students, our mentors and tutors also represent a diverse range of ethnic groups and comprise a fairly even mix of self-identifying men and women.

Our survey did highlight the fact that the in-house CareerFoundry team is not nearly as diverse as our student community, and that’s something we need to work on. Likewise, while 64% of our employees identify as women, we are aware that this gender diversity isn’t true of our development team.

Goals and objectives for the coming year

Following this report, we will continue to work on making CareerFoundry a more diverse, inclusive community. Below we have outlined just some of the diversity initiatives we will focus on in the coming months. We commit to reporting on the progress of these initiatives in our 2020 report.

Internal diversity and awareness

One of our main focuses going forward will be on internal diversity. We will continue to educate ourselves on the importance of diversity, and to work on making our hiring process more inclusive. This includes mixed interview panels at all times, anonymizing CVs, featuring salary ranges on job descriptions, and standardizing interview questions in order to eliminate bias.

We’re also partnering up with the Center for Intersectional Justice as part of our initiative to cultivate understanding and awareness. The first in-house training session to be led by an expert from the CIJ will take place at the end of April, focusing on unconscious bias.

Equal representation for women in tech

Women are underrepresented in the tech industry, and we want to play an active part in changing that. It’s great to see that women make up a large proportion of our student body, and it’s important to make sure this continues. We will continue to run special offers and discounts—such as our Women’s Day scholarship—to encourage women to learn tech skills.

Improving the gender balance in our in-house development team also continues to be a top priority. The challenge we are currently facing is how we can encourage more women to apply next time we have a position available.
Some approaches under discussion include improving job mobility in-house, and starting a web development apprentice scheme. We are also taking part in Girls’ Day, an initiative which aims to introduce school-aged girls (11 and upwards) to as wide a variety of career paths as possible. On March 28th 2019, we’ll be showing a group of six 11-14 year old girls what it’s like to work in web development, UX and UI design here at CareerFoundry.

**Making our course content more accessible**

Accessibility is also high on the agenda. We want to provide a first-class learning experience for everyone, and that means making our course content as accessible as possible. As part of our diversity survey, we also asked our students if they have any learning disabilities. 89.29% reported none; 0.32% (1 student) reported a mobility impairment; 4.87% (15 students) reported a specific learning need such as ADHD or dyslexia; 3.57% (11 students) reported a mental health disorder; 1.30% (4 students) reported a need or impairment not listed; and 1.95% preferred not to respond.

Our curriculum team is responsible for ensuring that all new course content is written with screen readers in mind—giving all images an ALT text, for example, and making sure that hyperlinks are descriptive. At present, almost all course videos are captioned, and we endeavor to provide content in multiple formats to cater to different learning styles and educational needs. Moving forward, we plan to conduct further research into diverse learning needs and how to cater for them. We teach our students about accessible design, and we want our courses to lead by example. This is something we aim to address more actively in the coming year, and to discuss in more detail in our 2020 diversity report.

**Creating a brand that everyone can relate to**

Here at CareerFoundry, we want to build a community that everyone can be a part of—and that means creating a brand that everyone can relate to. We know that words and images have the power to include or exclude, and to perpetuate or dispel certain stereotypes. Diversity and inclusion has therefore become integral to our branding and marketing strategy. Our branding must speak of the diversity of our existing student community, and in turn speak to each and every aspiring developer or designer out there—regardless of age, background, gender, ethnicity, and so on.

**Wrap-up**

That just about concludes our 2019 Diversity & Inclusion Report. We hope you now have a better idea of who we are at CareerFoundry, and of the inclusive community we are aspiring to be. We are extremely grateful to all of our students, mentors, tutors and employees who took part in the survey and allowed us this opportunity to reflect, learn and grow.

If you’d like to find out more about who we are and what we do, head over to CareerFoundry. You can also follow us on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook for regular updates.