Summary of Initiative
Our Student of Technology initiative embeds technology culture across BlackRock to improve performance by promoting technology education, creating community and enabling employees to effectively utilize a range of technology resources.

The Need
Technology has differentiated BlackRock since our founding. It resides at the core of how we invest, manage risk and connect with clients. BlackRock focuses on building the technology fluency of all employees — not just those in a technology function — to work smarter and faster and deliver more impactful solutions to clients.

The Solution
Promoting technology education — We are developing senior leaders through a reverse mentoring program, pairing them with junior tech-savvy mentors who teach them about topics ranging from social media to artificial intelligence. We are providing information through a Student of Technology Portal, which serves as a “one-stop shop” with content about training, trends, events and overviews of client-facing tech products. We are piloting a Student of Technology program in partnership with Coursera to include online courses from 140 top global university partners. The program is designed to accommodate employees from all backgrounds.

Creating a technology community — We host yearly Hackathons, inviting all employees to create tech solution prototypes. By using a process that connects ideas curated from throughout BlackRock to our engineers’ coding expertise, we’ve scaled the event well beyond our traditional tech businesses. We convene in-person and virtual “Tech Fests” and Town Halls focusing on key topics including cybersecurity and enabling hands-on experiences to drive adoption.

Enabling employees through BlackRock apps — Our OneBlackRock app “makes BlackRock smaller” by facilitating the identification of experience and expertise across BlackRock. A Student of the Markets app delivers real-time DIY education.

Partnerships and Enabling Public Policies
BlackRock is committed to global tech education, donating $1 million to Code.org to support free online tech curriculum development, and hosted a Girls Who Code Summer Immersion Program to teach high school girls to code. We partnered with Georgia Tech and Berkeley to launch the Hallac Scholars Program, which offers scholarships and internships to students from low socioeconomic backgrounds studying STEM subjects.

Outcomes/Benefits
Many client solutions can be traced back to Hackathon ideas, including Aladdin Risk for Wealth Management. This year more employees than ever participated in our Hackathon with 460 ideas submitted from 45 departments, and we had as many non-tech as tech participants, exemplifying the reach across the company. Many executive team members who’ve spent their careers in financial services are seeing how social media and other consumer apps can affect clients. Many are learning to code. Nearly half of all employees adopted the OneBlackRock app within weeks of launch. Nearly 5,000 people attended technology Town Halls globally. Our TechFest brought more than 35 percent of our New York office community together.

Laurence D. Fink
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
BlackRock, Inc.

“America’s largest companies, many of which are struggling with skills gaps in filling technical positions, must improve internal training to compete for talent and fulfill their responsibilities to their employees.”

Work in Progress: How CEOs Are Helping Close America’s Skills Gap