

Science Trust provides sponsorship to Holberton School coding program

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Coding at their desks, from left, are Caroline del Carmen-Cruz and Gabriela Martínez. (Credit: José E. Jiménez Tirado/Puerto Rico Science, Technology, and Research Trust).

The Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust recently granted a sponsorship to Holberton School to support its Holberton Software Development School and Computer Science coding program.

“The future is for coders. From opportunities in large companies running their operations digitally, to startups developing applications, as well as opportunities to work as independent contractors and consultants, in person

or remotely,” said Mercedes Díaz, Holberton’s director, when asked about the importance of coding and its appeal as a skill for many careers.

Holberton School is a software development and computer science school with flexible enrollment, based on peer learning projects. Arrived in San Juan in March 2020 and its first group started in September 2020 with the goal of graduating from 100 to 150 software engineers annually. They have 27 active students and in June they open their new group.

This educational concept emerged in San Francisco in 2006 seeking to offer teaching alternatives with computer programming and coding curriculum, integrating peer learning and with the option to pay for studies at the end, while already having a job. Holberton graduates have earned jobs at LinkedIn, Google, Tesla, Docker, Apple, Dropbox, Facebook, Pinterest, Genentech, Cisco, IBM, among others.

The Trust, as part of its mission to invest, facilitate and develop the capabilities that continuously move forward Puerto Rico’s economy, is also tasked with sponsoring projects and events aligned with its purpose.

“Innovation and technology are present in almost every scenario of the daily life. It is important for us in the Trust to know the impact and results when we invest and sponsor projects that train and make technology accessible, for

developing a career and as a skill,” said Sebastián Vidal, chief innovation officer of the Trust.

A sponsorship to Holberton School connected the Science Trust with two women — Gabriela Martínez and Caroline del Carmen-Cruz — enrolled in the school this semester with visions of the world of programming. They are the only two female students at the school since its start in San Juan.

Martínez, with a master’s degree in mechanical engineering, knew about Holberton and her plan was to move to Tulsa, Arizona to enroll. The pandemic changed her plan until she learned about the San Juan campus.

“Here I’ve had amazing peers and a real experience of the world of work. When you are a woman, and you enter a career whose world is masculine, you tend to be silent. Here I feel super supported, the community is inclusive and helps us grow,” she said, adding she feels that all that she is learning will help her manage her online business, as well as to develop a better understanding of the users’ experience with the front-end work.

Meanwhile, Del Carmen-Cruz said computer sciences and astrophysics are subjects she is passionate about.

“I like to plan, design and recognize patterns, while learning, and software engineering gives me an environment where I can do all this,” she said, adding that she likes that Holberton’s curriculum is 100% programming and that it is intense and fast, compared to a traditional university.

Students who graduate from Holberton learn to code in several languages, and as this constantly evolves, the most important skill they develop at Holberton is “learning to learn.”