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Holberton School and our daily "coding"

The Trust for Science, Technology and Research supports the technological readiness Holberton School offers to students passionate about technology

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Standing up, Mercedes Díaz, director of Holberton School, and Sebastián Vidal, principal Innovation Officer of the Trust for Science, Technology and Innovation of Puerto Rico. Sitting down, the two students scholarships for the trust at Holberton School: Caroline Del Carmen Cruz and Gabriela Martínez. (Supplied)

What do a computer science student, an engineering graduate and a marketing professional have in common? That unites them with the **interest in coding** and **Holberton School** (<https://www.elnuevodia.com/negocios/empresas-comercios/notas/holberton-school-planta-bandera-en-puerto-rico-y-apuesta-a-un-nuevo-modelo-educativo/>).

The Puerto Rico Trust for Science, Technology and Research recently granted a sponsorship to Holberton

School, the Holberton software development and computer science school. Thanks to this sponsorship, **the only two women** of this institution talked with us about their interests and what you have made you want to learn *software* development for their professional development.

"The future belongs to the coders. From opportunities in large companies that run their operations digitally, to startups that develop applications, as well as opportunities to work as independent contractors and consultants, in person or remotely," said Mercedes Díaz, director of Holberton when asked about the importance of coding and its attractiveness as a skill for many careers.

Holberton School is a flexible tuition software development and computer science school based on peer learning projects. He arrived in San Juan in March 2020 and his first group began in September 2020 with the goal of graduating from 100 to 150 *software* engineers annually. They have 27 active students and in June he starts his new group.

This educational concept emerged in San Francisco in 2006 seeking to offer teaching alternatives with a computer programming and coding curriculum, integrating peer learning and with the option of paying for studies at the end and having work. **Holberton graduates have obtained jobs in 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 capacities that continuously advance the economy of Puerto Rico, also has the mission of sponsoring projects and events aligned with its purpose. "Innovation and technology are present in almost every scenario of daily life. **For us in the Trust it is important to know the impact and the fruits when we invest and sponsor projects that train and make technology accessible,** such as career and skill," said **Sebastian Vidal**, Chief Innovation Officer of the Trust.

A sponsorship of Holberton School connected us with two women enrolled in the school this semester with novel visions of the world of programming. Interestingly, they are the only two female students in the school since its inception in San Juan. **Gabriela Martínez and Caroline del Carmen-Cruz related two interesting visions of the advantages of learning this skill and its application for different careers.**





Gabriela Martínez, graduated in Mechanical Engineering and now, student of Holberton School.

Gabriela, a graduate of Mechanical Engineering, knew Holberton and her plan was to move to Tulsa, Arizona to enroll. The pandemic changed his plan until he learned about the campus in San Juan. **He is a lover of 50s fashion and social media manager.** Coding weaves your interests in launching your clothing brand and long-term virtual store. "Here I have had 'amazing peers' and a real experience of the world of work. **When you are a woman and you insert yourself into a career whose world is masculine 'you tend to be silent'.** Here I feel super supported, the community is inclusive and they help us grow," he said.

She stressed that what she learns here will help her manage her virtual business and better understand the experience of her users with front-end work.

For her part, **Caroline**, born in Puerto Rico, grew up half her life in the United States and began university studies in Massachusetts, before her family returned to the island. He started studying and working full time and chose to only

dedicate himself to studying. **He told us that the computer science had been in his initial interests. He reads a lot about astrophysics, a subject that he 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 of this," he said. About his experience in Holberton he likes that the curriculum is 100% programming and that it is intense and fast, compared to a traditional university. **"I can learn as much as I do in college in half the time," he said.** "I love the laptop they give us. And the facilities are excellent, and their flexibility when we have been in lockdown." In her long-term plans she sees herself leading a company as a *software* engineer.



Caroline del Carmen-Cruz, a Holberton School student, passionate about coding.

In 2021, we live connected, we continuously access the network and although we are not aware of it, everything that runs there was created, developed, and optimized by a person who codified it. **"Everything that works digitally: our phones, cars, watches, home goods, the platform that allows you to access security in your home, or conduct commercial transactions on the web safely, there is a *coder* behind all that activity.** Video games on your smartphone or on your home console, the platform that allows you to study remotely or meet virtually with family and friends on the other side of the world, all that depends on coding to work, "said Díaz.

Students who graduate from Holberton learn to code in various languages, and as this constantly evolves, **the most important skill they develop in Holberton is to "learn to learn."** From there, **agile students graduate, highly motivated and prepared to do their job from day 1.** No matter the educational or work background, if they have interest and motivation and are committed to dedicating time to studies, Holberton can help them transform their future, and start a career that will be in high demand and with excellent remuneration.

Interestingly, **Holberton is the surname of a woman, Frances Elizabeth "Betty" Snyder Holberton (1917-2001) who was one of the six programmers of ENIAC, the first general purpose programmable digital electronic computer, created in 1943 by the US army.** Betty Holberton helped create what would later become modern software engineering and also participated in the creation and design of the FORTRAN and COBOL programming languages.

Mercedes Díaz, director of Holberton, brings to the school her career experience in marketing and sales with multinationals, such as Mars and Kellogs, in addition to her experience as an entrepreneur with a STEM educational program for elementary students. All this added to the fascination generated by *coding*.

"I truly believe that Holberton has a social mission, and has the potential to transform our economy by preparing many excellent software engineers, regardless of their economic, social background, gender, etc. Coding for all!"
