No upfront tuition Holberton School lands in P.R. from Silicon Valley

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Sylvain Kalache, co-founder and president of Holberton School, presents the project.

Holberton School, a full-stack software development school announced the

launch of its 10th location, which will open in Santurce.

Holberton's mission is to empower talented and motivated people to succeed in a software development career, regardless of their economic or socioeconomic background.

The school brings a curriculum developed by top experts from Silicon Valley, with a peer-based and project-based learning perspective, without the necessity of paying upfront tuition. Students don't have to pay for their education until they graduate as software developers.

"Holberton has proven across the world that motivated students, regardless of their educational or financial background, can find high impact tech careers," said Sylvain Kalache, co-founder and president of Holberton School.

"And because this education can scale quickly while maintaining its high quality, these students can make not only their lives better, but also serve and attract businesses to Puerto Rico who are desperate for high quality software engineering talent," he said.

Holberton comes with a solution to close the gap that exists between the lack of programmers and tech companies trying to grow in Puerto Rico and worldwide.

Based on that premise, local entrepreneurs Cyril Meduña and Adam Beguelin created Code Puerto Rico LLC, the entity that runs Holberton Puerto Rico.

"Human talent is everything, if we can't produce software developers at the level and at the rate that the industry is growing, Puerto Rico will not become a competitive factor worldwide on innovation and technology," said Meduña, Founder of Advent-Morro Equity Partners.

"This is why after leading the effort to create Parallel 18, a startup accelerator, we launched Morro Venture, an early stage venture capital fund to provide capital to these companies, and now an educational institution that will produce the human capital that is critical for these tech-companies to grow and compete globally," said the also co-founder of Code Puerto Rico LLC.

Risk capital fund Morro Ventures has $20 million to finance the growth of tech companies in Puerto Rico.

"At Advent-Morro we want to foster the development of the tech ecosystem in Puerto Rico. This is one of the few industries where we can use the Puerto Rican talent to create impactful companies with global reach," he said.

The partnership with Holberton School seeks to bring a competitive software programming curriculum to Puerto Rico, Meduña added.

Holberton's mission is to offer students a high-quality education regardless of their socioeconomical status. The program offers a payment alternative in which students don't need to pay tuition until they graduate and find a job.

With a $1.5 trillion debt crisis in student loans, these agreements offer an alternative to those who have chosen not to study because of their financial situation, Holberton officials said.

"Rock Solid Technologies has hired hundreds of software engineers in the last 20 years. Every day it becomes more difficult finding resources to fill those slots," said Angel Pérez, president of Rock Solid Technologies, about the challenges of finding programmers on the island.

"The arrival of Holberton Puerto Rico will cover a crucial need for our company. We trust that we can hire Holberton graduates soon," he said.

The curriculum at Holberton is designed to train students in software development even without any previous experience in technology. The program uses a methodology based on peer-learning and project-learning, which emphasizes comprehension and ability to learn in a collaborative environment.

With the peer-learning method, students learn to work in a collaborative manner, which simulates a real-life work environment.

"Learning how to code made a huge impact on my life. It took me from a small farm town in Illinois to the heart of Silicon Valley and now Puerto Rico," said Adam Beguelin, a serial technology entrepreneur who co-founded four Silicon Valley startups.

"By opening Holberton Puerto Rico I'm hoping to make that option available to anyone, regardless of their financial situation," he said.

Holberton is expanding its software development program, with locations in San Francisco, Cali, Medellín, Bogotá, and Barranquilla, Colombia, Tulsa, OK, New Haven, CT, Tunis, Tunisia, and Beirut, Lebanon.

Applications are now open for people 18 and older with a high school diploma or GED. The deadline to submit the application is April 30, 2020 through its website. For more information about Holberton, send an email to School Director Verónica Colón.