

From the Chancellor's Desk



February Update

February 25, 2022

KCCD Colleagues:

Yesterday was a sad day. More than 150 individuals lost their lives in Ukraine with many more to come. As we grieve the loss of life, let's double down on our efforts to continue to build peace and goodwill.

I was listening with a heavy heart to the news on KVPR as I drove, headed to Porterville College for the groundbreaking of the new Allied Health building which has been 13 years in the making – funded by both Measure G and Measure J.

It turned out to be a beautiful day, the sun shining brightly, the air clear, and snowcapped mountains on the horizon. The Nursing, Psych Tech and EMT students bustling with energy about this new facility. There were large images of the new building, and a video showing the careful design of beautiful learning spaces.

President Habib's face was beaming as she made introductory comments with much gratitude and pride for such an auspicious event. Trustee Corkins offered comments in his usual casual and humorous style. As I sat there absorbing the entire scene, I was profoundly struck by the significance of the role we play as community college educators. We have the opportunity to shape the minds and hearts for generations to come -- KernCCD, a beacon of hope, peace, and goodwill for all.





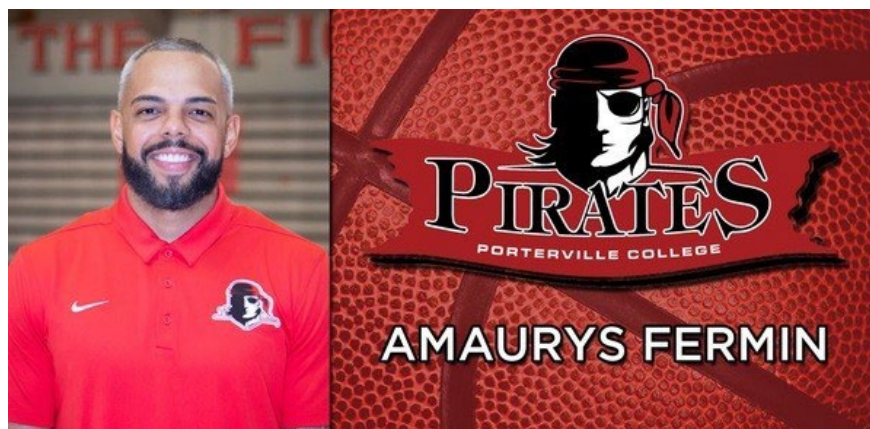
Getting to know our people:

The best way to build the spirit of collaboration and partnership across Kern CCD is to get to know one another. So, working with the communications teams at the three colleges, I am launching a series called “Getting to Know” where we will profile an employee of the district. We are kicking it off - or should I say, tipping it off - with a profile of **Amaurys Fermin**, the Head Men's Basketball Coach and a kinesiology instructor at Porterville College.

Amaurys joined the college in July and set out recruiting a full team - the Pirates had just 3 returning players from the previous season. He didn't have time to hire assistant coaches. But those challenges weren't enough to stop the Dominican Republic native who moved to New York when he was 9. The Pirates are fresh off an 8-game win streak, and are headed to the playoffs for the first time since 2003.

Take a moment to drop Coach Fermin a note as we at KernCCD #Gettoknow each other.

You can read more about Amaurys Fermin [on the KernCCD website](#).





Thank you, Roger Perez, for organizing this profile. Thank you, Stacey Shepherd, for the write up.

COVID-19 Updates

As we approach the second anniversary of Governor Newsom’s first stay-at-home order to fight against COVID-19, leaders in California and around the world are moving on to the next chapter of life with coronavirus.

[Against the backdrop of reported cases across the state dropping by 69.7 percent in the last 14 days](#), Governor Newsom has announced the nation’s first “endemic” strategy to fighting against COVID-19. In his [press conference introducing the strategy](#) on February 17, Newsom emphasized that the fight against COVID-19 doesn’t have a defined endpoint, and the state would continue to devote resources to preventing the disease. However, the administration is shifting to emphasize preventative strategies that are proven to work while avoiding school and business closures.

The state will also continue to test wastewater for virus remnants to identify the first signs of a surge, then mobilize health officials to find out if the surge constitutes a new variant. Newsom’s proposed budget includes \$1.7 billion to increase the health care workforce statewide and invest in laboratory testing capacity and data collection.

The state’s endemic strategy follows a broader shift nationwide toward easing COVID-19 restrictions. [The CDC is expected to announce new guidelines](#) that would determine when masking requirements would be recommended, which would be based around

hospitalizations and local hospital capacity as well as case counts. The CDC's previous metrics only took rising cases into account.

In Kern County, [hospitalizations are finally beginning to trend downward](#), with only 123 COVID-19 patients in local hospitals as of February 23, according to Kern County Public Health Director Brynn Carrigan. Hospitalizations in Kern peaked on January 25, with 331 COVID-19 patients.

In Tulare County, new cases have decreased to 34.9 daily infections per 100,000 people, from a peak of more than 200 in July. Testing positivity rates have also declined 22 percent, [according to the Visalia Times-Delta](#).

That's all I have for now.

For more updates from our KCCCD colleges, sign up for my blog at <https://sonyachristianblog.com/>

The future remains bright at KCCCD.

With much warmth and collegiality

sonya

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#KCCDDaringMightyThings

