

PC Kicks Off Spring Semester 2026

Porterville College officially welcomed students back to campus for the start of the Spring semester on Tuesday, January 20. While the week was cold and misty, that didn't stop the Pirate spirit from shining through.

Despite the gloomy weather, students came out to class in high spirits, showing up for the first day excited, energized, ready to learn and do BIG things this semester.

Fueling Student Success to help kick off the term, PC hosted "Welcome Week" activities on the Quad. We ensured students stayed warm and fueled for class by providing food and coffee each day.

For much of Tuesday morning, Porterville College President Primavera Monarrez took the time to walk around the Quad, introducing herself, and personally welcoming students back to campus while handing out coffee and snacks.

Help was also available in the Quad in the form of information about available programs and services for students, academic and mental health support, and of course, PC swag.

Representatives from many diverse departments—including Financial Aid, Counseling, and the Disability Resource Center—were on-site to help students connect with the resources they need.

This energy on campus is backed by impressive numbers, as enrollment is showing significant growth this spring. This semester, the college welcomes 4,656 unique students with over 11,332 total enrollments. These figures represent a robust 10% increase in enrollments over last year and an 11.4% increase in student headcount compared to last spring.

As President Monarrez noted, "At Porterville College, we truly 'Start Small and Go BIG.' We are here to empower students to achieve their dreams, strengthen our community, and shape the future of the Central Valley".



Is the Future of Learning Parked on Campus?

Dreamscape Learn Lab Visits Porterville College



Imagine transporting your students to a distant space station or a prehistoric jungle to solve a scientific crisis—all without ever leaving campus. This isn't science fiction; it's the Dreamscape Learn Lab, a high-tech mobile virtual reality unit that has officially arrived at Porterville College for a limited engagement.

The Kern Community College District is currently previewing this immersive "mobile classroom" on the PC Campus, offering a glimpse into a future where students don't just study subjects like biology—they step inside them. Far from a standard classroom setting, the trailer features 16 immersive stations equipped with VR Headsets for a 360-degree cinematic experience; Haptic Feedback Chairs to feel the environment around you; and Wind Effects, adding a physical layer to the digital world.

Whether they are exploring an "Alien Zoo" or navigating complex ecosystems, students are "hooked" into a narrative that requires them to solve problems in real-time.

The goal of this "virtual field trip" is more than just entertainment; it's about engagement and academic mastery. Early data suggests that this storytelling-driven approach is a game-changer. Students using this technology are nearly twice as likely to excel in their courses, as the immersive environment sparks a level of curiosity and retention that traditional lectures often struggle to reach.

We sat down with Todd Coston, Associate Vice Chancellor for Kern Community College District, to discuss how this temporary trailer could pave the way for a permanent transformation of education at PC.

See our conversation, and get an exclusive look inside the lab by visiting the link below:
<https://youtu.be/LFgcZLxUxrg>.

Chef Joe Amaya Brings Healthy Eating to TV and Campus

Porterville College's very own Food Services Manager, Chef Joe Amaya, recently appeared on KGET-TV in Bakersfield to showcase delicious, heart-healthy cooking and discuss the principles of the [Blue Zones Project](#).

During KGET's "Wellness Wednesday" segment, Chef Joe demonstrated how to make Roasted Cauliflower Fajitas, a flavorful dish designed to help people transition into healthier eating habits for the new year without sacrificing taste. He emphasized the importance of a "rainbow plate"—using multi-colored vegetables to boost antioxidant intake—and shared tips on using spices like cumin and garlic to replace salt for better heart health.

Chef Joe's television appearance highlights a larger mission he is championing right here on the PC campus: bringing the Blue Zones Project to Porterville College. As part of this initiative, the Treasure Cafe is introducing healthier menu choices and offering nutritious specials at a lower cost for students, specifically featuring a new Wellness Wednesdays menu.

"We're not trying to win an award; we're trying to feed a family," Chef Joe shared during the segment, underscoring his practical approach to nutritious, accessible food.

You can watch Chef Joe's cooking demonstration and learn more about his healthy eating tips by visiting <https://youtu.be/5R2Fj70qWk>.



Porterville College Celebrates Grand Opening of Basic Needs Center



On Thursday, February 5th, Porterville College took a historic step in supporting student equity and success with the grand opening of our new Basic Needs Center.

The ceremony, held on campus, brought together administrators, community leaders, and students to unveil a facility designed to ensure that no student has to choose between their education and their next meal. Take a look at the video below for more from the event.

The morning began with words from President Monarrez and a moving testimonial from a student who shared their personal journey navigating food insecurity and housing instability. Their story underscored a sobering reality: you cannot focus on an exam when you are worried about where you will sleep, and you cannot absorb a lecture on an empty stomach.

Research consistently shows that “basic needs insecurity”—the lack of reliable access to food, housing, and wellness—is one of the greatest barriers to degree completion. When students are stressed by these fundamental gaps, it leads to:

- **Reduced Cognitive Load:** The brain’s “bandwidth” is consumed by survival stress, making complex learning difficult.
- **Lower GPA and Persistence:** Students facing hunger are statistically more likely to drop classes or stop out of college entirely.
- **Health Complications:** Lack of nutrition and hygiene access leads to higher rates of illness and absenteeism.

By addressing these needs directly, the Basic Needs Center acts as a bridge, allowing students to shift their energy from survival back to their studies.

Following the opening remarks, attendees were invited inside for a first look at the comprehensive services now available to all PC students. The center is far more than just a resource office; it is a holistic support hub featuring:

- **The Pirate Pantry:** A significantly expanded space stocked with fresh produce, dry goods, and refrigerated items.
- **Clothing Closet:** Professional and casual attire for students heading to interviews or needing seasonal gear.
- **Laundry Facilities:** On-site washers and dryers to help students maintain hygiene and dignity.
- **Partner Resource Hub:** Private space for community service partners to meet with students, helping them navigate external support systems like CalFresh or housing assistance.

The Basic Needs Center is a testament to the fact that at Porterville College, we believe every student deserves a fair shot at success. We encourage any student who is struggling—or anyone who knows a peer in need—to stop by and see what resources are available.

Discover the New Home of Innovation at PC



The **Porterville College Innovation Centers** have a brand-new home starting this Spring semester! You can now find the Business, Literacy, and STEM Innovation Centers conveniently located inside the LRC Building in the center of campus.

Come visit our new spaces located in the spaces formerly known as Computer Commons A and B.

Funded by the Department of Education HSI Title V funding (P031S200174), the Innovation Centers are dedicated to enhancing student academic success, experiential learning, and professional readiness. Through mentorship, hands-on projects, and skill-building programs, striving to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application.

Coming Soon: A New Maker Space!

Excitement is building for the opening of our new and improved Maker Space! Keep an eye out for announcements as we prepare to unveil our new space designed for 3D printing, fabrication, and bringing your creative ideas to life.

Innovation Centers Hours of Operation:

Monday - Thursday: 7:00 am - 7:00 pm

Friday: 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Stop by the LRC today to check out the new space and see how we can help you succeed this semester!

