



Prostate Cancer: Addressing global health problems from Milledgeville

About one out of every eight men in the U.S. will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in his lifetime.

In 2020, about 18.8 per 100,000 men in the U.S. died of prostate cancer (American Cancer Society). But this rate is doubled for non-Hispanic Black men, who die from the same disease at a rate of 37.5 per 100,000 men.

Why? That’s what Dr. Ernest Kaninjing is working to find out.

An associate professor of public health at Georgia College & State University, Kaninjing is part of a global effort to understand why Black men of different ethnicities experience worse prostate cancer outcomes. One of his research projects focuses on African immigrant men, who have even worse survivorship numbers.

His research is particularly relevant to Milledgeville-Baldwin County, where 42% of the population identify as Black or African American.

“We’re trying to prevent that—and narrow the gap,” Kaninjing said.

“The communities we work with are counting on us as the experts—the scientists in the field—to update them about trends, recent developments in treatment, care and survivorship,” he said. “We’re not just doing research to collect data for the sake of it, we’re doing research to help improve health outcomes.”

Instead of comparing Black and white patients, Kaninjing is investigating “within group differences”—differences between cultures that shape many Black ethnicities.

“Caribbean immigrants, African immigrants, African Americans—there are significant cultural differences that may influence or impact some of the disparities we’re seeing,” he said. “If found early, prostate cancer is very treatable, so we’re trying to change the culture.”

For the last five years, he’s worked with Georgia College students and residents to discover what’s causing these differences in survivorship for Black men and what healthcare providers can do to stop it.

In the meantime, Kaninjing and his community of advocates are sharing all the information they can to prevent those high death rates. The good news is: When found early, prostate cancer is curable with a survivorship rate of over 97% over five years.

Kaninjing is connected to more than 100 members of the Milledgeville-Baldwin community, and that number continues to expand. At each town hall he hosts alongside community leaders, there are new people willing to help spread the word.

“Right now, I have a community partner, Donald ‘Don’ Reese, who’s a master barber. He’s been in Milled-



Dr. Ernest Kaninjing works to understand different prostate outcomes in Black men.

geville for over 17 years, he’s well known, and he’s a survivor,” Kaninjing said. “He’s an advocate, speaks about prostate cancer and knows how to bring people together.”

“Maintaining these relationships means you never go to the community empty-handed,” he said. “You go to them with something that could enhance their life.”

They bring educational materials, like flyers and pamphlets, host clinical speakers and bring in specialists to provide the community with useful information that will improve their health.

They raise awareness of preventative care, the importance of knowing your family history and understanding your options after diagnosis through town hall meetings and seminars.

Dr. Kaninjing responds to questions about his seminar at a local senior center.

Now, they’re working to create a support group for survivors and those experiencing prostate cancer treatment to encourage other men on the road to recovery. But most important, Kaninjing says, is sharing

awareness.

“Some men are reluctant to talk about this,” he said. “We’re slowly trying to overcome this barrier with education and patience. We want to influence the culture to be more open to talking about health matters.”

That’s one of a few significant challenges to prostate cancer survivorship for those in Milledgeville and other rural areas in Middle Georgia. Not having specialists nearby and transportation challenges add to the disparities already present.

They’re already making a difference.

“It’s good to see the openness and receptiveness of the community,” Kaninjing said. “You’re not going to get success overnight, but men who have gone through that road are making it a lot easier for us.”

“We’re trying to be a resource to the community,” he said.

When it comes to prostate cancer, the key is early identification. Kaninjing encourages everyone to educate themselves, gently remind their loved ones to be proactive and ask questions.

“It’s heartwarming to see the community benefit from some of these resources that we provide,” Kaninjing said. “But ultimately our work is not done to eliminate those disparities, it’s one step at a time.”

If you or someone you know is struggling with prostate cancer, or willing to share their survivorship experience, please reach out to Ernie Kaninjing at [ernie.kaninjing@gcsu.edu](mailto:ernie.kaninjing@gcsu.edu).

GCSU named top public school in the South by U.S. News & World Report

Continuing its upward momentum, Georgia College & State University (GCSU) climbed to top-10 status as a public regional university in the South and rose in several additional major categories in U.S. News & World Report’s newly released 2024 Best Colleges guidebook.

Georgia College ranks sixth for Top Public Schools—Regional Universities in the South.

In the category of Undergraduate Teaching Programs, Georgia College ranks third in overall teaching excellence when compared to other public regional universities in the South. In addition, Georgia College is fourth in the Most Innovative category among public regional universities in the South.

“I am thrilled that Georgia College & State University continues to be recognized as a top-tier public university,” said President Cathy Cox. “This ranking shows the world what we already know to be true—the personal, transformational experiences that Georgia College embeds in a contem-



porary liberal arts education ultimately prepares our students best for successful careers.”

“Being sixth in the South—and the only state university in Georgia to make the top 10 as a best public Southern school—reflects the different kind of experience we offer our students,” Cox said. “This recognition also exemplifies the

success of our dedicated faculty, high-achieving students and innovative offerings.”

The category for best Undergraduate Teaching Programs for public regional universities in the South focuses on schools that “have faculty with an unusually strong commitment to undergraduate teaching,” according to the U.S. News & World Report website, and “whose faculty and administrators are committed to teaching undergraduate students in a high-quality manner.”

In the Overall Ranking for Regional Universities category—comparing private and public schools in the South—Georgia College jumped six positions to 16th, a considerable increase from 22nd in the 2023 ranking and 31st in 2018.

Georgia College’s Nursing program is tied for the number one spot among public universities in the state of Georgia, and the university’s undergraduate business, computer science and psychology programs were also recognized.

Did you know?

Georgia College & State University will hold its seventh annual William Harvey Address at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 28, in the Arts & Sciences Auditorium.

The lecture—“Breast Cancer Treatment in 2023: Is Less More?”—will be given by Dr. Monica Rizzo, professor of surgery in the division of Surgical Oncology at Emory University’s School of Medicine.

This free talk is part of an endowed lecture series on Medicine and Society and is open to the public.

William Harvey (1578-1657) was a distinguished English biologist and physician in the era of Queen Elizabeth I, William Shakespeare and Galileo.

He’s known as the founder of experimental and comparative physiology and discovered the correct principles of blood circulation.

For more information, please contact Dr. Ashok Hegde at [ashok.hegde@gcsu.edu](mailto:ashok.hegde@gcsu.edu).

Bots: University & Sodexo rollout new Pizza Hut delivery system for students

We are not alone.

Here comes Barnacle, Techno and Scrumptious... and they come in peace.

They’re part of a fleet of 10—the cutest little robots you’ve ever seen, brought to Georgia College & State University by its dining company, Sodexo.

They deliver pizza to hungry students—5 p.m. to midnight Sunday through Thursday on West Campus.

And, well, the students are eating it up. The perky delivery bots are winning both hearts and stomachs.

They’re the size of a pet—on wheels. The robots maneuver sidewalks, back up and turn around. Their front screens show blue blinking eyes, white stars and red hearts. They wink at you and have

multiple sounds. They bleep, whistle and squeal with mechanical delight.

And, if you’re missing your cat, they even purr.

Students use the Everyday APP on their phones to order pizza or snacks and drinks from a convenience store by Pizza Hut. An electrical engineer, employed by Sodexo, works behind the scenes to ensure bots are working correctly, turning corners and bypassing obstacles. Orders are placed inside the bots, which are then loaded, locked and ready to roll.

They enter apartment buildings and bring orders straight to a student’s door. The lid then opens to reveal goodies inside.

One student told the media he was having a bunch of friends over this weekend but didn’t want to leave his room to get food. Another said

he had already ordered, and the bot arrived quickly with the pizza still hot.

It’s all part of a bunch of new things students are seeing on campus regarding food.

The MAX dining hall was renovated over the summer. It’s much brighter and offers new options like gluten-free and vegan meals. There’s also a new U Cook station, where students make their own omelets and quesadillas.

“We are one of the first universities in Georgia to introduce A.I. delivery robots,” said Sam Fernandez, general manager for Sodexo at Georgia College.

If pizza bots prove to be popular—the plan is to expand their use to Main Campus in January.

It’s an easy bet that’ll happen too, consider-



New kiwibots deliver Pizza Hut pizza to students on West. Campus

What’s going on in Bobcat Territory?

[Visit frontpage.gcsu.edu/calendar](https://frontpage.gcsu.edu/calendar)

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

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6:30 to 7:30 p.m. GCSU Creative Writing Program Visiting Writers Series with novelist and poet Tiphonie Yanique in Ina Dillard Russell Library.

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10 a.m. to 3 p.m. GCSU Academic Expo in Student Activities Center.

6 to 8 p.m. GCSU Volleyball vs. Augusta State University in Centennial Center.

7:30 p.m. GCSU Theatre presents “These Shining Lives” in Russell Auditorium.

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7 p.m. GCSU’s annual William Harvey Address with Dr. Monica Rizzo on breast cancer in A&S Auditorium.

7:30 p.m. GCSU Theatre presents “These Shining Lives” in Russell Auditorium.

7:30 p.m. GCSU Music’s “Faculty Recital” with the Allen Duo in Max Noah Recital Hall.

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7:30 p.m. GCSU Theatre presents “These Shining Lives” in Russell Auditorium.

30

7:30 p.m. GCSU Theatre presents “These Shining Lives” in Russell Auditorium. The play ends tomorrow, Oct. 1, with a 2 p.m. performance.