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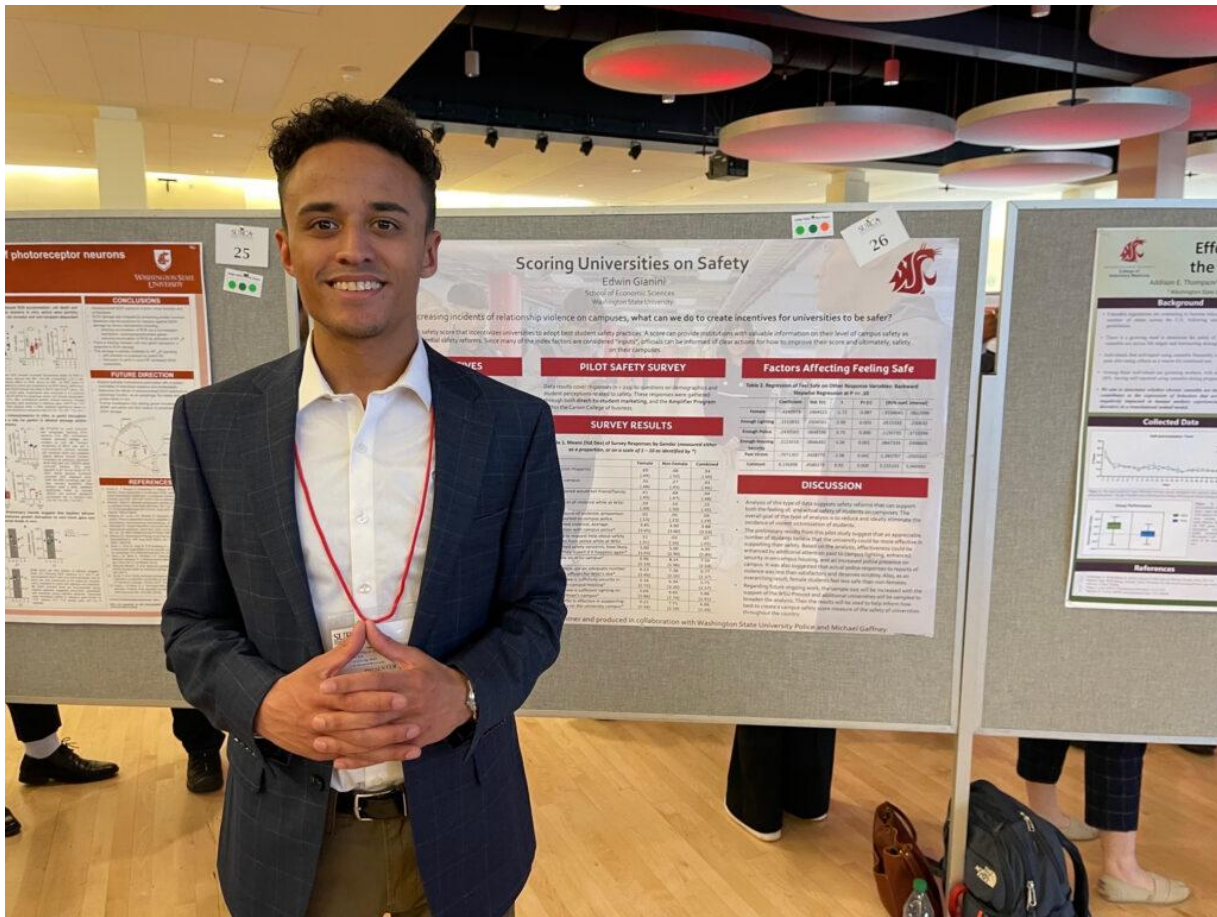
# School of Economic Sciences grad Edwin Gianini engages students to improve campus safety

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Studying fundamental ideas that help people thrive and fellow college students stay safe, Edwin Gianini has journeyed across the state, through varied work and college paths, to graduate this spring with a bachelor's degree from Washington State University's [School of Economic Sciences](#).

Gianini's interests bridge economics with student engagement, campus safety, and a love of learning. Raised in Bellevue, Wash., he attended college in Bellevue for two years before realizing that he wasn't cut out for his original path in oceanography.

"Like a lot of college students, I originally had no idea what I wanted to do," Gianini said. "I was throwing a dart and hoping it would hit something."



“Get involved with people and causes,” says Edwin Gianini, graduating senior in the School of Economic Sciences. He partnered with the Lauren McCluskey Foundation on an undergrad research project to score universities on student safety.

He left school and joined the workforce, finding that life experience brought new focus and direction.

“I realized that I liked understanding how the world economy works, how money works, and wanted to help people achieve financial security,” said Gianini, who applied to WSU to study economic sciences. “Only by understanding the foundation, how things work, can you deliver a great product or idea.”

After meeting with faculty and staff in the School of Economic Sciences as well as the CAHNRS Office of Student Success and Academic Programs on ways to improve student engagement, he partnered in his final semester on an undergraduate research project with SES Regents Professors Jill McCluskey and Ron Mittelhammer and the [Lauren McCluskey Foundation](#).

The foundation, which raises awareness and resources to change cultures for better responses to dating violence and stalking on campuses, honors the life of Jill McCluskey's daughter, Lauren McCluskey, who was harassed and murdered while a University of Utah student despite multiple pleas for help.

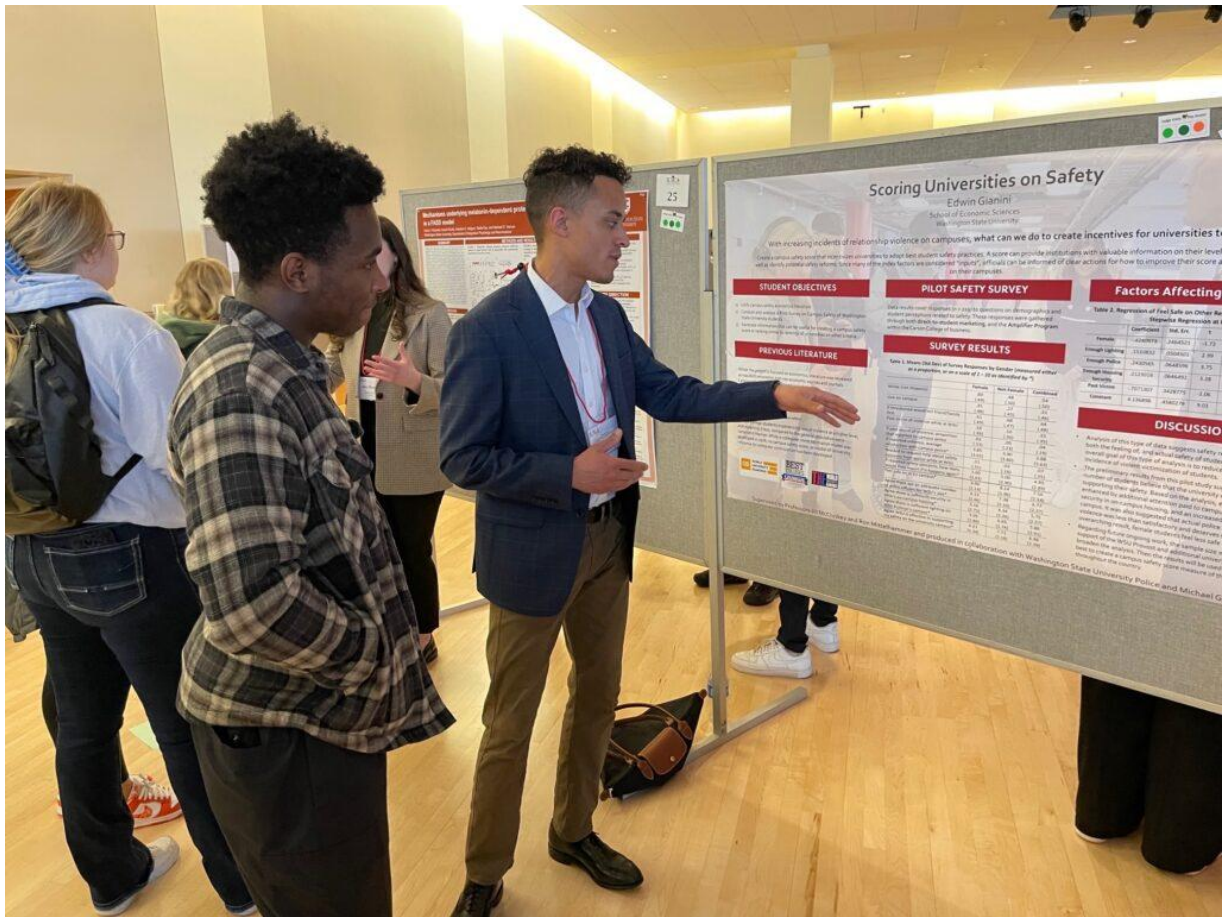
Gianini's project, "Scoring Universities on Safety," was shown at WSU's 2023 Showcase of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity. Surveying nearly 400 university students and reviewing several years of Title IX and Clery Act data as well as health, criminology, insurance, education, and economics literature, Gianini analyzed and weighed factors that influence how safe students feel on their campus.


Top positive factors included plentiful lighting and the presence of police and housing security personnel.

"Being female has a significantly negative impact on a student's feeling of safety," Gianini said. "Female students feel about 15 percent less safe compared to male students. If you are a past victim of violence, which women are at over twice the rate of men, it falls further."

From the literature, Gianini found that college students underreport their violent victimization compared to the general population—as much as 70 percent of victims do not report their violent encounters. Official data also contains gaps, for example, omitting cases that never reach a conviction. One important takeaway is the need to report victimizations that happen off-campus.

Gianini's project lays the groundwork to create a campus scoring system that could incentivize best safety practices, sharing ideas across universities to help students feel and actually be safer.



 Edwin Gianini, 2023 graduate from the School of Economic Sciences, shares results from his spring semester research project at WSU's Showcase of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities.

Regents Professor McCluskey was extremely impressed in her work with Gianini.

“Edwin will represent WSU well as an alumnus both professionally and as a leader who will contribute to the greater good,” she said.

“This is one cog in a larger project,” Gianini said of his research experience. “The goal is to expand it nationwide.”

His biggest lesson from the project was how much can be accomplished in a short time, “when you focus on outcomes rather than output and ensure that the processes in place align with that objective.”

Gianini's interest in economics is taking him to a new city, where he will help financial clients while remaining personally involved in safety. After graduation, he will begin a career in banking, while staying involved as a volunteer with the Lauren McCluskey Foundation.

"Get involved with people and causes," Gianini advises undergraduates. "The most valuable thing you take away from your time at university should not be your degree. Employers are constantly looking for more out of candidates and if you allow it, the environment around universities will teach you what that is before the interview."

 By [Seth Truscott](#)

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