The time of their lives

Fresh out of high school and ready to tackle the next stage of their education, thousands of young people started tertiary studies this month. The next few years of their lives will transform them through both personal and educational experiences.

Katherine Smith and Catriona May hope they’ll have the time of their lives.

Several thousand students have started their tertiary education at universities around the nation in the past month. Not all, but most of them come directly from secondary school, the youngest of whom are just 17.

The next five years will allow their intellects and interests to stretch, their world views to widen and their independence to flourish. There will be challenges along the way, some personal, some educational, some simply related to making the shift to a new life routine.

Professor Johanna Wyn from the Melbourne School of Graduate Education is an expert in youth education and wellbeing, and the lead researcher in one of Australia’s most significant longitudinal studies of young people in Australia.

“The university years are the first independent years of young people’s lives,” she says.

And the world for university students becomes much more chaotic compared with the one they experienced during their high school years, and they have to manage this, she says.

“They need to make space for relaxation, through things like music or sport for instance, which draw the attention of students to make space for relaxation, through things like music or sport for instance, which draw the attention of students to come isolated and overwhelmed, and it’s also important as having confidence in their own situations.

Professor Wyn says another key factor of success at university is being emotionally and intellectually engaged in what is being studied.

“It’s very difficult to predict what labour markets and occupations will be like in the future, and often these needs to be sustained over at least three years, so following their interests is paramount.”

And as much as interests and intellectual pursuits nurture so too do difficulties—perhaps even more so than we might ever have thought, according to Associate Professor Lyn Waters, who directs Positive Psychology Programs at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education.

She says while getting into university is about doing well academically, succeeding as a tertiary student calls on all available resources.

“Students have more control over their academic outcomes than they might believe,” Associate Professor Watts says.

“Most people think of academic achievement as purely a result of intelligence, but in fact new research is showing academic achievement is strongly influenced by personal strengths and positive practices.”

In particular, Associate Professor Waters says the personal strengths of hope, self-regulation and curiosity predicts academic achievement.

“Hope encourages goal-setting. When people set goals they make a regular effort to achieve them, and are also more able to recover from setbacks.

“Self-regulation encourages disciplined behaviour like setting a weekly timetable and sticking to it. In fact, self-regulation is a stronger factor in predicting academic success than intelligence. And curiosity is important because – as obvious as it sounds – being interested in your studies is key to academic success.”

Positive psychology practices have also found wellbeing is strongly linked to academic achievement, Associate Professor Watts says.

“When we feel good we think more clearly; our levels of dopamine increase, which assists in attention, focus and memory. So taking half an hour to go for a walk or see a friend for coffee actually strengthens our capacity for learning.”

Associate Professor Watts’ tips for integrating positive practices into daily life for example, not just students, include setting clear goals and multiple pathways to achieve each goal, making time for mental stillness, including a daily ‘digital detox’ of at least 10 minutes when we walk away from the computer, the phone, iPods and other stimuli, adopting a positive mindset and hunting out the good in our lives, no matter how small.

To help put life’s challenges into perspective, keeping a journal reflecting on positive things that happen during the day, and fostering positive and supportive relationships.

She says these steps may seem simple but they are powerful.

“The wonderful thing we are learning from research is that really simple practices can enhance our wellbeing and academic achievement. Best of all, these practices can be learned.”

“I think we have more control over our academic outcomes than we might believe.”

Associate Professor Watts says:

“When we feel good we think more clearly; our levels of dopamine increase, which assists in attention, focus and memory. So taking half an hour to go for a walk or see a friend for coffee actually strengthens our capacity for learning.”

When we feel good we think more clearly; our levels of dopamine increase, which assists in attention, focus and memory. So taking half an hour to go for a walk or see a friend for coffee actually strengthens our capacity for learning.

Youth entering adulthood

When we feel good we think more clearly; our levels of dopamine increase, which assists in attention, focus and memory. So taking half an hour to go for a walk or see a friend for coffee actually strengthens our capacity for learning.

Best of the best: a group of Melbourne’s brightest students

From Melbourne and around the world newsroom.melbourne.edu dreamlarge
A new exhibition drawing on material from the University of Melbourne Archives about protest movements in Australia from the 1960s to the 1980s was launched recently by Germaine Greer. By Katherine Smith.

ARCHIVES OF PROTEST

Through Germaine Greer has engaged in her fair share of protest as a feminist, says her biographer, she simply spent her life “trying to think clearly about things that weren’t clear.”

Professor Greer of the University, made these comments at the recent launch exhibition drawing on material held in the University of Melbourne Archives related to protest movements in Australia from the 1960s through to the 1980s.

Protest! Archives from the University of Melbourne focuses on a number of key social movements and campaigns of that period. It is supported by a range of activity on campus by students and staff. The exhibition showcases archives and other material which can stimulate an educated generation of justice-seekers.

As the exhibition showcases archives and other material which can stimulate an educated generation of justice-seekers.

Archives of protest

A new website designed to fire-up community-controlled connections was launched last month, offering users a place to reflect and rejoin. By Kate O’Hara.

FROM THE VIKE-CHAIRMAN

World-class research makes for world-class teaching

Research-teaching is one of the things which makes university life so unique. And that is something which the University of Melbourne is committed to, in the service of our University.

The University of Melbourne is the oldest university in the country, and one of the leading universities in the world. It is committed to research and teaching excellence, and to the media.

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is published

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large deviations.

Large deviations.

Large deviations.

Large deviations.

Large deviations.
**Research ties in Latin America**

Engagement between Australia and Brazil is leading to many significant developments in learning, teaching and research in higher education. By Liz Banks-Anderson.

*To date, Mr DeGaris has been presented with many honours and awards. He was a speaker at Cumberland School of Law, University of New South Wales, where he focused on environmental litigation. He was also recently brought back to Melbourne and is an adjunct professor, was a speaker at Cumberland School of Law, University of New South Wales, where he focused on environmental litigation.*

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**Gardens in the sky**

Mr Paixão believes SWB is an ‘amazing program’ through which he has been able to develop his research, and he believes it will also benefit Brazil. "The University of Melbourne is building up to be one of the best climate colleges in the world," he says.

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**Fortune favours the bold**

Helping others and taking risks are keys to success for 2013 Lawyer of the Year winner and Melbourne Law School graduate Annessy DeGaris (LLM 1992), by Monique Edwards.

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**Veterinary Science & Hospital Open Day**

**Sunday 17 March 2013**
250 Princes Hwy, Werribee 10am – 3pm

Stop behind the scenes of our world-class Veterinary Hospital. Our annual Open Day is for the wider community and prospective students to tour our outstanding facilities and find out about all the important services we provide.

Discover an exciting range of animals, attend public lectures, course lectures, interactive displays and impressive demonstrations. Speak to veterinary staff, current students and members of special interest groups.

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vet.unimelb.edu.au/openday
Take your rightful place

At a Melbourne Graduate School

"Bring all your hopes and aspirations with you when you come – but leave the hopes and aspirations of all those around you behind. Don’t bother to phone someone at your place. There’s no need to feel guilty about that."  

The University of Melbourne’s world-class graduate school attracts Australia’s best and brightest Indigenous students from all over the country. At the peak of their game, academically and professionally, Indigenous students are able to look to the right path to building their potential so Australia’s highest achievers and leaders can shape it.

They come for a range of reasons: The reputation of the University’s graduate school; wanting to learn from the best in the country. They support their research projects with financial aid, which is important as they become the main source of funding for their future. So they come with a clear purpose.

Read Story’s story and all the reasons why Australia’s #1 university is the top place for Indigenous students: Paulaunimelb.edu.au or call 03 830 487 328

Let’s talk about sex

Health for generations

The University of Melbourne is leading research that is shedding new light on adolescents, and in particular, the health of future generations. By Annie Rahilly.

In a world first, these studies are starting to show that it matters profoundly for adolescent health being a strong indicator for future adult health in terms of the persistence of risks such as obesity, tobacco use, physical inactivity and emotional problems, our study shows that people have less time than they were in the first few years of life. It is a remarkable finding. In the early years, we see the development of the brain and its capacity to form new and powerful connections. In particular, maternal mental health during pregnancy and in the post-natal period, how they fare as parents and how their children fare as adults. The World Health Organization recommends that mothers receive regular health checks during pregnancy and in the post-natal period. This research is looking at how what happens in adolescence is also predictive of adult health (in terms of the persistence of risks such as obesity, tobacco use, physical inactivity and emotional problems). Our study shows that it matters profoundly for adolescent health being a strong indicator for future adult health in terms of the persistence of risks such as obesity, tobacco use, physical inactivity and emotional problems.

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In particular, maternal mental health during pregnancy and in the post-natal period, how they fare as parents and how their children fare as adults. The World Health Organization recommends that mothers receive regular health checks during pregnancy and in the post-natal period.
Continued improvement in THEs Reputation Rankings

The University of Melbourne has again been named Australia's top university in the 2013 Times Higher Education World Reputation Rankings. Melbourne has improved four places on its 2012 position, rising to 37th from 41st.

The University has been Australia’s leader in these rankings since they were first published in 2010.

The 2013 results came from 16,639 responses to a world-wide, invitation-only survey of senior academics.

Professor Philip Scarr from the Melbourne Business School led the Melbourne delegation.

"We hope that our findings will provide a guide for changing the timing of treatment and helps explain how resistance to drugs develops," Professor Scarr said.

This research was supported by a grant from the Australian Communications and Media Authority. It takes two days to reach maturity in each cycle but the drug remains in the bloodstream for up to 24 days. However it is apparent that rather than a single factor, several factors in combination influence on student achievement, I hoped this would lead to a better understanding of the process and investment in teachers' professional learning.

This top-down simplistic: measures based on externally imposed and in some cases ideology and research, has included asking the 'bottom half' of students to count in per cent of teachers paying teachers by 'marking' pupils, ranking schools on the performance of their graduates, hiring and paying top teachers and firing and bonus pay for 'top' teachers, allowing evaluation to become principal, and so forth. At the same time, we have seen the movement away from bulk purchase of textbooks, including in New Victoria, South West and Northern regions, the message is ‘do better with less, or else’.

In looking to Asian ‘Education powerhouses’ for migration is one of the fastest-growing areas. In the United States, the performance of the other countries appears to be somewhat of a mixed bag and so forth. We need to recognise and build on the strengths we have rather than attempting to ‘cherry pick’ what appears to be a recipe for success.

Yet to some extent the concern is valid - the perceived degradation and the expected gain is less apparent. Issues of recent concern are looking for any real and lasting answers. Why do our students appear to be 'behind' in the primary years, yet are rated as 'behind' in the primary years, yet are doing better in the secondary years? These phenomena need investigation, not inductive and parochial.
Researchers have shown that part of the discrepancy which had previously been explained by dark matter was wiped out by the ice ages, which triggered changes to landscapes, evolution, influence biodiversity.

The research, led by the University of Melbourne and University of Tasmania has shown that plant diversity in south-east Australia is as rich as some of the most diverse places in the world, and that most of these species are present during the ice ages, probably because cooler climate conditions "The team's work was published in the prestigious US Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences recently.

Dr Kale Sniderman of the University of Melbourne's School of Earth Sciences says the findings show extinction is just as important to diversity of organisms as evolution.

"Traditionally scientists believed species have more flora species that others because they evolved more rapidly in these locations. We have overturned the theory, which emphasises evolution, by showing that extinction may be more important," Dr Sniderman said.

"The general understanding of the history of Australian vegetation over the past 20 million years is one in which slow decrease of the continent drove formerly widespread vegetation to extinction. "It was thought the rainforests were replaced by arid vegetation, which now covers most of Australia which (we know in south-east Australia known as the typical built landscape)." However, the diversity of the ice ages in the past million years or so was thought to have been maintained by introducing new species by climatic changes during glacial periods."

"Dr Sniderman says fossil pollen extracted from a remarkable sediment drifts at Stone Creek Basin near Eyreton helped there was much more to the story.

"The millions of pollen grains I found showed that, around 200,000-300,000 years ago, the vegetation cycle back and forth between rainforest and drift flora in both Central Victoria and arid South Australia."

We found many leaf fossils that were beautifully preserved and under the microscope, which was exciting because most leaves do not survive. We did find though that even though most of Australia is now a dry land, it was anciently very different."

Dr Sniderman’s colleague Dr Greg Jordan of the School of Plant Sciences at the University of Tasmania used electron microscopy to undertake study about 1200 individual sclerophyll leaf fossils, and found a surprisingly large number of species.

"Then few of these fossils which looked quite similar under a low power light microscope were actually quite distinct," Dr Sniderman says. "We then asked how diverse this was, compared with different vegetation types in the modern world. We know that the fossils could not have been transported far or far beyond them up ended in our lake and, therefore this fossil diversity must reflect the diversity of a fairly small source of ancient vegetation."

"By comparing our fossil diversity with previous studies on the transport of modern leaves into lakes, we realised suddenly that we were looking at something very interesting. Our ‘Eureka’ moment came when we realised eastern Australia must have been a thriving forest as diverse as similar under a low power light microscope."

This evaluation had important implications for understanding what could happen in the future, and more generally had implications for understanding what allowed the floras of some regions to be much more diverse.

The research led by the University of Melbourne and University of Tasmania has shown that extinction, rather than evolution, impacts plant diversity. By Silvia Dropolich.

"South-western Australia has a huge diversity of shrub-themed shrubs and trees such as Eucalyptus, Banksia, Grevillea and Anigozanthos, making it one of the most biodiverse places on Earth," Dr Sniderman says. "The southern tip of South Africa is even richer, with astonishing numbers of similar kinds of plants like Protea and Eriocrania.

"Dr Jordan says not only has the study overturned current thought on the role of extinction in plant diversity, it has implications for understanding how Australian plant diversity will deal with current and future climate change."

"The species that went extinct in south-west Australia during the ice ages were likely to be the ones most sensitive to rapid climate change, meaning the species that now grow in eastern Australia may be more capable of tolerating rapid changes than predicted by current science."

"However, the species in hotspots of diversity across the world are likely to be the ones most sensitive to climate change, because they have been protected from past climate changes."

The study was carried out in collaboration with Dr Eric Bigelow, Lecturer in Zoology at the University of South Africa. online.unimelb.edu.au
A Miller's Tale

Alex Miller (BA 1965) is one of Australia’s foremost novelists and a two-time winner of the Miles Franklin Literary Award. He spoke to Chris Weaver.

A sense of home comes up strong when we talk to Alex Miller. The 2015 Miles Franklin Literary Award-winning author recently received the Melbourne Prize for his 2013 novel, <i>The Humming Bird</i>, which he travelled to London to collect.

"I was overjoyed," says Miller. "It was a strange, wonderful feeling. The world looked different to me, but it was the same old place. I had come back to Melbourne."

Miller is Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Melbourne, and a leading figure in the Australian literary world. He is known for his novels, short stories, and poetry, which reflect his experiences of life in rural and urban Australia, and his passion for art and artists.

"I was told by my mother that I had a literary bent when I was a little boy," Miller says. "She gave me books, and I devoured them."

Miller's work is characterised by a deep exploration of the human condition, and a profound understanding of the complexities of life in modern society.

"I believe in the power of words to create worlds and to express truths," he says. "My work is a reflection of my own experiences, and I hope it resonates with others.

"I am proud to be a member of the Australian literary community, and I am grateful for the opportunities it has given me."

Miller's most recent novel, <i>The Humming Bird</i>, was a finalist for the Miles Franklin Literary Award in 2015. It is a compelling exploration of love, loss, and the human experience.

"I wanted to write a story that would reflect the complexity of life," Miller says. "I wanted to explore the idea of hope and despair, and the ways in which they coexist.

"I hope that readers will connect with the characters in the novel, and that they will feel something when they finish it."
**A globalised student voice**

In a fragmented media landscape a new student-oriented international relations publication, The Melbourne Globalist, will provide a strong voice for students to contribute to the discussion of international affairs, with a focus on Australia’s role in the world. By Liz Banks-Andereson.

**Globalising students**

Founded and Editor-in-Chief of The Melbourne Globalist Nicholas Fabbri says that even in a clear, linear course such as international relations, “there’s nothing more fragmented these days. It’s taking a decade to develop an idea that took five minutes to formulate.”

Back in 1972, the Street Law program at Melbourne Law School was established with the aim of giving law students a practical focus. Since then, the program has grown to have 40 years of history and is currently in more than 30 countries around the world.

The program, which is now run under the guise of the International Street Law Movement, aims to introduce students to the ideas and theories that underpin the law, in a way that is relevant to their daily lives.

The Melbourne Globalist is the online student-led publication of the Melbourne Law School, which is one of the five law schools in Australia that participate in the Street Law movement.

The street law program provides an opportunity for law students to work with secondary school students from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds. Street Law helps law students and secondary students alike understand the extent to which their view of the world is influenced by beliefs, backgrounds and experiences.

As incoming students participating in an exchange or study abroad program are welcomed to the University the concept of contributing and documenting one’s experiences will be at the agenda at the Australian Festival of Travel Writing supported by the University of Melbourne. By Liz Banks-Anderson.

**Word on the Street Law**

Law student Kathryn Sutherland recalls her first teaching experience as initially one that she was not up to the task. “I was terrified,” she says. “I didn’t want to do it, but I was involved in the Street Law program.”

The Street Law program at Melbourne Law School is one of the most successful of its kind that has been running successfully for more than 40 years. The first Street Law program was developed and delivered by law students at the University of Denver in the USA in 1972, today programs that identify as being Street Law have spread to more than 30 countries around the world. The program has grown and evolved, as have all of the key legal institutions and practices that we take for granted.

The topics covered in Street Law programs are intended to be relevant to the everyday lives of their audience, and the Melbourne Law Society Street Law program has provided an opportunity for law students to work with secondary school students from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds. Street Law helps law students and secondary students alike understand the extent to which their view of the world is influenced by beliefs, backgrounds and experiences.

**Musings from afar – informative tales of travel at the University**

Travel is a topic that is also gaining increasing academic attention as writers explore the ethics of travel and the art of travel writing. This year the festival aims to engage even more students in the Street Law programs as a way of giving them the tools they need to explore the ethics of travel.

The University of Melbourne has already set up its own festival in 2008. Associate Professor Jacqueline Dutton, the festival’s Director (Associate Dean Engagement Faculty of Arts), believes the festival has secured such a positive reception because “travel is a subject that is engaging, but is also well-researched and informed.”

The festival will run from 22 – 24 March, and will be held in Melbourne, with the final panel to be held at the University of Melbourne, Friday 22 March at 6.15pm, hosted by Michael Williams, Melbourne Law School and high school Student Mobility Program Manager.

The festival will be launched at the annual Travel Writing Festival at the University of Melbourne, Friday 22 March at 6.15pm, hosted by Michael Williams, Melbourne Law School, and high school Student Mobility Program Manager.

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Love of musical harmony is nurture not nature

A new study has revealed that we can learn to love music – even the music we think we hate. By Rebecca Scott.

Our love of music and appreciation of musical harmony is learned and not based on natural ability – a new study by University of Melbourne researchers has found.

Associate Professor Neil McLachlan from the Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences says previous theories about how we appreciate music were based on the physical properties of sound and the ear, rather than leading to a biological ability to hear harmony.

“Our study shows that musical harmony can be learned, and it is a matter of training the brain to hear the sounds,” Associate Professor McLachlan says.

“So you thought the music of some exotic culture (or jazz) sounded like the yelling of rats? It’s simple because you haven’t learned to listen by those rules.”

The researchers used 41 volunteers with a range of musical training and tested their ability to hear combinations of notes to determine if they found the combinations familiar or pleasant.

“We found that people needed to be familiar with sounds created by combinations of notes before they could hear the individual notes. If they couldn’t find the notes they found the sound discordant or unpleasant,” he explains.

“This finding overturns centuries of theories that physical properties of the ear determine what we find appealing.”

Co-author on the study Associate Professor Sarah Wilson also from the Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences says the study found trained musicians were much more sensitive to dissonance than non-musicians.

“When they couldn’t find the note, the musicians reported that the sounds were unpleasant, whereas non-musicians had much less sensitivity,” Associate Professor Wilson says.

“This highlights the importance of training the brain to the particular combinations of sound-likes those of traditional music,” she says.

Depending on their training, a strange chord or a song sound was accurately pitched and pleasant to some musicians, but unpleasant and very discordant to others.

“The study showed that even the ability to hear a musical pitch (or note) is learned,” she adds.

To confirm this finding they trained 19 non-musicians to the ability of a random selection of western chords.

Not only did the participants’ ability to hear notes improve rapidly over 10 short sessions, afterward they reported that the chords they had learned sounded more pleasant – regardless of how the chords were tuned.

The question of why some combinations of musical notes are heard as pleasant or unpleasant has long been debated.

“The most generally accepted theory of dissonance is that we are wired with our tradition of indigenous communities,” he says.

“The method of producing an adaption – or becoming tired – of the sound, and adapting to the sound, and supporting their comfort, is something that is based on the importance of harmony.”

He says the results are based on a combination of the indigenous way of life of Australia and the development of a different way of learning.

“In Australia there is a deep understanding of the traditional music culture, and the shift from the old way of life,” he says.

“With increasing awareness of the importance of harmony, the indigenous people feel that the Westerners have learned the way of life, and the Westerners have learned the indigenous way of life.”

He says the study is the first step towards understanding the importance of harmony in the indigenous culture.

“I think that this study is the first step towards understanding the importance of harmony in the indigenous culture.”

The study was published in the Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, www.cmmr.unimelb.edu.au
EDUCATION, PERFORMANCE, AND ART

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Wednesday, 20 March, 5.30pm
Conductor: Benjamin Northey

Established in 2012, the New Music Studio celebrates Berio, Lachenmann and Furrer, and includes the world premiere of a new work by Melbourne based composer Andrew Scott. The ensemble will perform: Richard outgoing for the 2013 edition of ANZAC Day.