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**Career camp.** Cassie Gibbons, high school admissions counselor for Keiser University, gets input from Morgan Safranek of Palm Bay, one of the campers at the university's Camp KU. The camp helps students plan for life after high school. Maria Sonnenberg, FLORIDA TODAY

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## Camp KU charts course for grads

Keiser University program offers career options

*BY MARIA SONNENBERG  
FLORIDA TODAY*

For procrastinators -- as well as students hoping to get a jump-start on their future -- Keiser University's Camp KU offered a two-day glimpse into life after high school.

Last week's workshop attracted about 45 new and soon-to-be graduates from Melbourne, Eau Gallie, Palm Bay and Bayside high schools.

Phillip McKinley got his high school diploma in May but still hasn't settled on a career path. The Melbourne resident was checking out his options at Keiser. So, too, was high school senior Winson Bayonne. "I'm trying to get an early start," said Bayonne of Palm Bay.

The Keiser camps at several of the university's 14 campuses across the state, help students undecided about their future learn about available options. The camp includes college and career counseling, class observations, chats with instructors and current students and participation in hands-on learning.

Keiser University is a career-oriented, private university, with an enrollment of about 10,000 students. About 800 study at the Melbourne campus.

"Some students readily admit they have no idea about what they want to do and they're asking for help," said Keiser's director of high school admissions, Gene McDonnell. "It's a very challenging time for them, a big time in their lives."

McDonnell said some recent high school graduates feel overwhelmed by all the options open to them. "The camps give them a plan, an experience of what college is like," he said.

McDonnell travels throughout the state helping open the eyes of high school students.

"Our goal as a university is to encourage students to make a decision about their future," McDonnell said. "We hope everyone chooses education instead of procrastination."

To ease the decision-making process, McDonnell tries to include the entire family.

"That's very beneficial, because it's a family decision," he said. "It's neat to see the support when the family makes a collective decision."

Keiser University's academic calendar makes the school attractive to students who want to continue immediately into higher education, officials said. Students concentrate on one class at a time so accepted students can immediately start attending class without waiting for a semester to end.

"We have an incoming class every month," said Kelli Lane, university spokeswoman.

Keiser's schedule also appeals to students eager to get their career moving.

"We've seen a trend with students who graduate in May and June and start with us in June or July because they want to move on with their classes," Lane said.