



Milestone Mondays!

Each Monday we will add another NAU Milestone, distributed via [NAU Connect](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

1940s

- In **1941**, National American University (NAU) founder, **Clarence Jacobson**, opened its doors to students who desired specialized business training on a Rapid City, South Dakota main street. From these humble beginnings, National American University was born. The first graduating class from then-named National School of Business had 28 students; 25 of whom were women with intentions of work in the secretarial fields.
- Clarence and Katherine Jacobson owned National School of Business from **1941 through early 1962**. During that time, Clarence Jacobson visited countless high schools, farms, ranches and personal homes throughout South Dakota and other states. He recruited students from very small towns, emphasizing the college's secretarial and business degrees.
- In the **1940s**, the Jacobson's routinely helped new students find housing (often with private families) and jobs (to help them pay for tuition).
- Clarence Jacobson coached a men's basketball team for NSB during the **1940s and 1950s**. The sports program grew in the **mid-60s** with a rodeo team. Basketball, volleyball and soccer were later added. Teams became known as Mavericks in **late-70s**.
- The Jacobsons shared with the students' small town newspapers any successes to help promote the college in these small towns. For example, a 1949 graduate, Ila Gluhm, shared several newspaper articles from her small hometown paper, the Harrold Journal. One headline read, "Harrold Student Again Wins Most A's at NSB."
- According to **1944 alumna, Thelma (Jacobson) Wagner** (no relation to Clarence Jacobson), Mr. Jacobson would start off classes by having students sing, "Oh What a Beautiful Morning," from the Broadway musical, *Oklahoma!*. Ironically, the lyrics contain reference to a "mav'rick," which would become the university's official mascot nearly 30 years later.

1950s

- **1950s:** The operations of National School of Business were conducted jointly by the Jacobsons, with Katherine (Bragg) Jacobson serving as the business person and Clarence Jacobson traveling extensively, especially in summers, to recruit new students. Rapid City community leaders and business people respected the Jacobsons and what they were doing by helping to provide strong, educated and locally-based employees. Clarence had received a bachelor's degree from Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa, and a law degree from the University of Iowa. Both Jacobsons were highly respected school teachers. Mr. Jacobson taught speech and encouraged competitive debates at NSB.
- By **1951**, National School of Business offered 9 degrees, ranging from 18 – 6 months: Senior Business Administration and Office Machines (18 months), Senior Business Administration (18 months), Junior Business Administration and Office Machines (12 months), Junior Business Administration (12 months), Senior Secretarial and Office Machines (12 months), Senior Secretarial (12 months), Junior Secretarial and Office Machines (10 months), and Clerical and Office Machines (6 months).
- **1953**, the National School of Business received accreditation as a one-year school of business from the accrediting authority of the United Business School Association. This was national and institutional accreditation which relates only to specific academic or career programs. This was a significant accomplishment.

1960s

- Under Clarence Jacobson's leadership, ground broke in **1960** for a new location for the Rapid City campus and administration building. Moving from the Hoseth Building on St. Joseph Street, the new location on Kansas City St., across from the courthouse, was a two-story, brick building with several classrooms, a bookstore, library and administration office. In 1963, the campus grew with the addition of a residence hall, Diana Hall.
- **Harold D. Buckingham** acquired the school in **1962** from the Jacobsons. Mr. Buckingham strongly believed in making quality educational opportunities available for every person who desired it. He embraced open enrollment, turning away no one who was willing to give college a try. This philosophy is one NAU continues to embrace. NAU has always believed that a university should be built around the needs of its students, from business classes for returning veterans to online courses to provide a pathway for working adults.
- In **1963**, the secretarial programs continued and new classes in accounting and business administration were part of an expanded, and increasingly popular, curriculum. Secretarial programs later diversified to include medical and legal forms, and this overall career field endured for many years.

- **In 1965, the University's first entry in the realm of intercollegiate sports was a rodeo club with team members including men and women.** Before that there was recreational bowling, swimming, snow skiing, roller skating and basketball. During the final 15-20 years of the Maverick's rodeo team's existence, National College or National American University finished almost every season in the top 10 in the country. All sports teams were known as the "Mavericks," which conveys a sense of independence or an unwillingness to run with the herd: true leaders and trendsetters.
- **In 1967, the [NAU Foundation](#), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, was founded** to support eligible NAU students by offering scholarships for academic excellence and to support exceptional faculty with professional development scholarships. For the past many years, the Foundation Board of Directors have approved the appropriation of \$100,000 in student and faculty scholarship, with the majority (\$80,000) directly benefitting students. Likewise, faculty scholarships are awarded with eye toward student impact. For example, the Foundation supported a Faculty-Student Mentoring program in which participating faculty mentored students who were identified as needing additional support to stay in school.
- **In 1967-1968, NCB was accredited as a Senior College of Business,** and as such it was only one of 10 similarly accredited institutions, and also the only one in the country west of Ohio.

1970s

- **In the 70s and 80s,** day and night programming were doing well, with traditional students enjoying the flexibility of day and night course, and non-traditional students benefitting from night classes. To keep students engaged, staff assisted in finding housing, counseling, food service, employment, and healthcare. There were also numerous student organizations, intramurals and athletics during this time.
- **In 1970, John Hauer replaced Bob Buckingham as president of the university.** An aggressive effort to attract transfer students from the one and two year business colleges created almost immediate results, producing a major impact on the success and future of NAU (then called the National College of Business). Top graduates from other smaller business schools were eager to take advantage of NAU's degrees, receiving appropriate transfer of credit for their previously successful educational efforts.
- **On June 9, 1972,** Rapid City, South Dakota suffered a devastating flood resulting the loss of 238 lives. The college was several blocks south of the creek, and at a much higher elevation. The facilities in the residence hall became occupied with new and returning students who had arrived for the summer term, and with people who had lost their homes and had nowhere else to go. College staff members were excused from duties at the college for as much as three days in order to volunteer to help with clean up, or to assist with other duties in the city. Members of the data processing staff and some

students helped by maintaining data on where certain individuals could be found, and could reported as safe, missing or deceased. One current staff member, Linda Pottorff, who has been with the college for nearly 50 years, recalls helping by running messages from place to place to assist with communication because telephone lines were down.

- **In 1974 and 1975, the then-named National College of Business became a leader in the creation of branch and/or extension campuses.** The extension at Ellsworth Air Force Base and the Sioux Falls, South Dakota branch campus were immediately successful. Convenient scheduling, offering classes at night or weekends, along with instructors with professional backgrounds began to attract new students, transfers, veterans and active duty military personnel. Two locations in Denver, Colorado and two in the Twin Cities of Minnesota extend the range and services of the university.
- Since **1974, Ellsworth Airforce Base** in Western, SD, has served as an extension center for National American University. It has served active duty, reserve, National Guard and retired military personnel. Others being served are military family members, veterans receiving VA benefits, DOD employees and their dependents, base contractors, and the residents of nearby Box Elder, SD. The campus offers both Bachelor of Science and Associate of Applied Science degree programs, and classes which meet the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) requirements for oral communications, written communications, humanities, math, and social science.
- In **1974, the National College of Business men’s soccer team** – called the Royals – were the Kennedy Cup champions. From 1971-1974 men’s soccer at National College of Business dominated. Named the “Royals” for the NCB’s team color – blue – they won the Kennedy Cup for three years in a row. Women’s volleyball and golf also got its start in the early 70s. Athletic teams became known as the “Mavericks” in the late-70s.
- In **the 70s**, Vicki (Selman) Christopherson, Lila (Reukhauf) Glade, Cathy (Davis) Lobdell, and LuAnn (Corn) Crist were individual and team National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association (NIRA) regional rodeo champions. They were inducted into NAU’s Athletic Hall of Fame in 1997.
- Between **1974 and 1980**, National American University, then called National College of Business, became a nonprofit corporation operated by trustees.

1980s

- In **1980**, a special building was constructed on the Rapid City campus to accommodate the operations of a new and important educational program in **veterinary technology**. A number of local and regional students from the farm and ranch communities found career interests and opportunity. This vet tech lab is still being used by NAU.

- In **1980**, the name of the university was changed to National College in order to align with new programs which did not have an emphasis on business, such as technological careers, computers, electronics, tourism and allied health.
- In **September 1983**, Harold Buckingham sold the college to Al Terranova, and the Midwest Education Systems Inc. (MESI) and the physical facilities were leased to MESI by Property Rentals Inc., which was owned by the Buckingham family. The college was converted by MESI to a proprietary institution. Within the first year of MESI's operation of National College, it acquired Huron College in Huron, SD. By **1987**, Mr. Terranova's extensive personal holdings were creating serious financial problems for the university and in this same year, MESI filed for bankruptcy. In 1988, National College operations were returned to the Buckingham family by order of the court.
- In **1982, the Lady Maverick Basketball** team National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) National Championship! In 1987 and 1988, the Maverick Men won the NCLAA Basketball Championships in Bristol, TN and Madison, WI.
- On **November 22, 1987**, Robert Buckingham recorded a statement on the future of the college. "At the time that the health of the college was restored, consideration should be given to create the means to sell stock on the public market, and that this would help generate income for growth and continued development of the college," said Robert Buckingham.

1990s

- On June 6, **1990, David Ellis** of Rapid City, SD, purchased NAU (then called National College) from the Buckingham family, to include the Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Saint Paul, Denver, Colorado Springs, Pueblo, Kansas City, Albuquerque and Ellsworth Campuses. At the time, Mr. Buckingham, then-80 years old, was experiencing health challenges. This was Mr. Ellis' third time trying to buy National College. He was the president and co-founder of College Survival, Inc., a Rapid City-based educational consulting and publishing company. College Survival Inc. grew out of an extended orientation program and class required of all freshmen students and all students new to National College. National College operations were to run by a board of a corporation called Learning Technologies Corporation (TLC), with Ellis as Chairman and the sole stockholder. After three months, however, Mr. Ellis exercised a clause in the purchase agreement, citing decreasing revenues and admissions that threatened College Survival, Inc. He returned National College to the Buckingham family and several members of the prior administration returned to their positions.
- In the **1990s**, coinciding with the restoration of the athletic programming, there was a strong English as a Second Language program, and a large number of Japanese students and student-athletes from Brazil and Europe. According to Linda Pottorff, who started with NAU as a student in 1968 and has worked here ever since, these students "brought

language and cultural differences as well. This was also different than what we had experienced in our [student accounts] department, and although the language, and in some cases even the alphabet were unfamiliar, these students were a joy in our work. The diversity of cultures was a strength overall, and the different groups sharing and learning from each other was a definite asset.”

- In January **1994**, **Dr. Jerry Gallentine** was named president of NAU, then-named National College. He helped usher in regional accreditation, reorganization, and online learning. Dr. Gallentine retired as President of NAU in July 2015 after 22 years of service.
- Distance learning classes were being developed in **1996**, with some online class opportunities in **1998**. Sometime later (during **1999**), the university’s accreditation was extended to include distance learning programs.
- **Name changes** throughout NAU’s history are representative of the university’s evolution.

1941: National School of Business: Name reflected the purpose of the school at that time which was to offer returning veterans specialized business education to assist in securing employment.

1965: National College of Business: Name changed from “school” to “college” for prestige and in preparation of accreditation as a Junior College of Business in 1966.

1980: National College: “Business” dropped to align name with new non-business program offerings.

1997: National American University: The name change “was appropriate and reflective of the dramatic evolution of in the academic structure and offerings,” including graduate classes and degrees and new campuses. Online courses were added shortly thereafter.

2000s

- In **2000**, a Master of Business Administration (MBA) was approved and added to the program opportunities to career development. The campus-based program had been an institutional goal for more than 20 years and was well-received.
- In **2001**, the university launched its Distinguished Service Alumni Award initially honoring graduates at its Rapid City, Ellsworth Air Force Base, or the Distance Learning Campus. In 2016, the alumni relations office expanded the award system wide, recognizing 8 distinguished alumni from NAU locations in Rapid City, Sioux Falls, and Watertown, SD; Colorado Springs, CO; Mesquite, TX; Bloomington, MN; Albuquerque, NM; and Wichita, Kansas. The annual NAU Distinguished Service Alumni Award recognizes alumni for their educational and professional accomplishments and for their service to others in the university, workforce, community, and society.

- During **2002** the **Lady Maverick Volleyball Team** won the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) National Championship in San Diego, CA. They were undefeated with 41 wins/0 losses. In 2006 the Lady Mavericks again won the NAIA National Championship, and again they had an undefeated season with 41 wins. Fernanda Vivancos-Nelson was a 4 year All-American, the NAIA volleyball player of the years-2001 & 2003, and a NAIA Hall of Fame member.
- In **2002**, Healthcare Management was added as a bachelor's degree program. It was first approved for offering in South Dakota, to be followed in Kansas City, Denver and Colorado Springs.
- In **May 2009**, an alumni reunion event was held over a two-day period on the Rapid City campus. Alumni from the Rapid City, Ellsworth Air Force Base, and the Distance Learning campuses, and residing in the Black Hills area were invited.
- In the **2009**, several new programs were added, including criminal justice, applied information technology, Microsoft E learning, healthcare coding, health information technology, and medical services technology. NAU received specialized accreditation of the business degree programs by the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE). In the fall of 2009, NAU was authorized to begin offering a master's degree in nursing (MSN), beginning in the winter quarter.
- In the **fall of 2009**, authorization for public trading of NAU Holdings Inc. stock was received from three sources. In October and early November 2009, the U.S. Department of Education, the Federal Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Accreditation Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools each affirmed the university's request.
- In **2010**, the second Colorado Springs and Wichita campuses were opened.
- In 2011, **Guy Tillett published *Milestones: The 70-year progression of National American University***. Tillett brought a unique set of qualifications in writing the book. He's lived much of the history of NAU, having served on staff for more than 40 years at the time of press as a faculty member, Vice President and Dean of Student Services, and as Director of Alumni Services. *Milestones* is a carefully detailed chronicle of the sometimes dizzying evolution of National American University, including its trials and tribulations, including accreditation, academics, campus expansions, leadership changes, dorm life, student organizations, sports and more. *Milestones: The 70-year progression of National American University* is available by contacting the NAU Alumni Office at 605-394-4976 or alumni@national.edu.