

**For Release 8 a.m.  
April 8, 2013**

**The Power of Friendship:  
Three NAU Students Lean on Each Other on the Path to a College Education**

**MINNESOTA — April 8, 2013** — National American University announces their graduation ceremony slated for June 7<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. at Bethel University, Great Benson Hall, in St. Paul, Minnesota. Among those graduating are three students who started their education journey together and are now graduating together.

“I can’t do this without you,” never rang more true for three students at the Roseville, National American University Campus.

Kristina Lafontaine, A.A.S. Business Administration Spring 2013 NAU graduate, started school at NAU in 2011, a quarter later with Lafontaine’s urging Sarah Nelson enrolled in the A.A.S. Business Administration program. A quarter after that, their friend Grayson Clevenger enrolled in the program as well. Two years later, after life, moves and personal struggles, they are graduating together and walking the stage in May.

“They are my success story,” Lafontaine said. Gathering with smiles, jokes and food at Grad Fest Tuesday night, the best friends once again were able to hang out face to face. Nelson has moved to Duluth and Lafontaine has moved to Jordan, “I’m still here [Roseville],” Clevenger said.

“I thought it would be good for the other two to get into school. It would be a good situation for everyone,” Lafontaine said. Nelson added, “NAU is my third school. I wouldn’t have finished if it wasn’t for these two.”

The trio was able to figure out their personal strengths in order to assist each other through their course work. “These two [Grayson and Lafontaine] are good at writing, she’s [Nelson] good at math, so

we would ask each other for help in those areas.” All agreed, no one is the ‘best’ at going to school, but together they strengthen each other’s weaknesses.

In college, personal life sometimes overtakes school and it may be hard to focus. This trio has found doing it together, their personal life centered around school, making it easier to accomplish their goals. They were able to get through the ups and downs together because they did it as a group. “It also made classes more fun,” Lafontaine said.

In conclusion, reflecting on graduation the trio offer these words of wisdom to future students, “Have a support group. If I didn’t have these two I wouldn’t have succeeded. They pushed me,” Nelson said. Clevenger says, “Stay focused, balanced, find a happy medium between life and school.” Lafontaine added, “Keep your mind on your studies. Keep your head in the game.”

National American University (NAU) is a regionally accredited, proprietary, multi-campus institution of higher learning offering associate, bachelor’s, and master’s degree programs in health care and business-related disciplines. Accredited by The Higher Learning Commission and a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, NAU has been providing technical and professional career education since 1941. NAU opened its first campus in Rapid City, South Dakota, and has since grown to multiple locations throughout the central United States. In 1998, NAU began offering online courses. Today, NAU offers degree programs in traditional, online, and hybrid formats, which provide students increased flexibility to take courses at times and places convenient to their busy lifestyles.

Photo by Sue Baugus, story by Kristin Marthaler