

NAU Recent Alumni Stories: Caleb Boone

What is your degree?

I earned a finance degree from NAU. I approached the decision for a finance degree in reverse of most students. I had worked in financial services for nearly 8 years prior to starting my coursework at the W. A. Franke College of Business. I passed the required tests for my series 6 and 63 investment licenses. I also worked as a Personal Banker for about five years. My current career is as a Mortgage Loan Officer. I have about 6 years of experience with mortgages and I have worked full time as a mortgage loan officer for the past five years.

1. How did NAU prepare you for your present job?

This is a difficult question to answer. There are a few reasons for this and I will try my best to explain. I had my current career before I started at NAU. I was deemed a “non-traditional” student. One of my finance professors accurately and humorously explained that it just means I am old. Compared to many of my peers this was very accurate. I work for a great company and make a pretty good income. NAU helped me develop skills to be a better resource for my clients and business partners. It helped me by pushing me intellectually and learning new and valuable financial topics to discuss with clients. It also forced me to work with deadlines and have a well-planned and coordinated day. One thing that was different for me is that rather than being able to possibly use these skills in the future I was able to implement them into my business immediately. Creating and fine tuning presentations also helped me in being able to have a professional edge when developing referral partners. Being able to understand and speak coherently about financial concepts and using correct financial terms give you an edge in the job market. I believe that NAU helped me with all of these aspects with my career.

2. What advice would you give to current NAU students who are both working and going to school full time?

Going to school full time and working full time is extremely difficult. I also have a family so I balanced being a father, student, and mortgage professional, as well as being involved in the community. The advice I have for students is to be flexible and persistent. I didn't have time to mess around with my grades. I didn't miss assignments, I always did my homework, and was prepared for class. If I felt like I was struggling with a specific topic I would spend extra time studying that topic so that I would have specific questions for the professors rather than saying “I just don't get this.” This was very helpful and most of the time I was able to figure it out rather than go in for office hours. When I needed help I met with my professors and I got help. I ended up getting a 3.75% GPA. I can assure that this is not because I am the smartest student but I was persistent. You also have to miss out on a lot of sleep. That part is not fun but I had a countdown app on my phone that told me exactly how many days, hours, and minutes I had until graduation. This was particularly helpful on my final semester when I was tempted to let my grades slip.

3. Future career goals?

I really enjoy my current career as a mortgage loan officer. It's a great career where I can earn a good living, experience professional development, and help a lot of families make educated decisions around their finances. Here are some specific goals that I have.

- Be in the top 1% of mortgage originators in the United States
- Have my primary referral partners be CPA's and Financial Advisors
- Be a 100% referral based business