New York City: It’s one of the great cities of the world, the epicenter of the American Dream. But with its fast-paced lifestyle and high cost of living, it also has a reputation for chewing newcomers up and spitting them out. As the saying goes, if you can make it there, you’ll make it anywhere.

Some young alumni of the College of Business have ventured to New York City to try their luck in the Big Apple -- with impressive results. Whether advertising, marketing, sales, finance, media, or analytics, these Business Bulls are making their mark on their chosen industry.

SUNNY BOKHARI, ’12

Sunny Bokhari said her time at USF, where she juggled her pursuit of both an MS in Finance and an MBA with leadership in student organizations and a part-time job, helped her prepare for her current role at Wall Street’s Goldman Sachs, where she describes the corporate culture as “everybody loves to work.” “It’s everything I always wanted to do,” she said. “I’m really happy.”

As a financial analyst in the controller’s department of the investment management division, she is unable to talk about the specifics of her job, but said she is generally doing mutual funds performance management. A native of Pakistan, Bokhari said she enjoys the melting-pot qualities of the big city, and the beauty of the Hudson River at night.

For students looking to prepare for a fast-paced job at a top firm like Goldman Sachs, Bokhari said she would advise them to make good grades, but to be involved outside of the classroom and take advantage of opportunities. “At the end of the day, your GPA is just a number,” she said. “You could be a 4.0 student, but you have to show yourself as a well-rounded person, a leader who knows what you’re doing.”

Continued on Page 2
Kristen Keese, ’12

Kristen Keese said living in the Bulls Business Community helped her set her sights high with the help of her BBC advisor.

“I would change my mind every two weeks, and she would help me figure out what I could do to make whatever my dream was that week a reality,” she said.

To figure out what she could do, Kristen turned to her BBC advisor. With the help of her advisor, she started volunteering at the Bull’s new ESPN channel and worked her way up to a full-time internship.

“Kristen, every time she came in our office, we had to bring her coffee because she worked so hard,” her BBC advisor said.

As graduation approached, Kristen’s dream had crystallized into a desire to work in the media industry. When she met a Nielsen recruiter at a USF networking event, the company’s culture and job opportunities seemed like a good fit with her skills as a marketing student, she said.

Keese kept in touch with the recruiter and spoke to people within the company. And when a job opened up in the TV division of the New York City office, she knew it was the right opportunity for her.

“One of the coolest things about New York is that it feels different every day,” she said. “It’s so large and that’s really why I decided to go and learn about meeting people and building relationships.”

Keese started at Nielsen within the Digital Television Video Division and now works in their communications division.

Nate Collins, ’10

Graduating in 2010 with a marketing degree, Nate Collins’ path to the Big Apple was a winding one. Collins, who had served as an intern with USF Athletic throughout college, accepted an internship offer with the Tampa Bay Rays after graduation. That started him on a whirlwind career path that has taken him, within three years, to the New York Yankees ticket sales department.

Collins has worked for five sports organizations in four cities post-graduation: the Rays, a Kansas City soccer nonprofit organization, Major League Soccer in Minnesota, Sporting Kansas City in Kansas City, and the New York Yankees, where he now works as an account executive.

“Sports is a relatively small circle,” he said, reflecting on his team-to-team moves. “The Yankees called, and that’s obviously a call that you’ve got to take.”

He said New York and his career trajectory are a continuation of his life pattern; his father worked for the U.S. Navy, so his family was constantly moving worldwide. The adaptability he has learned has served him well in the big city.

“One of the coolest things about New York is that it feels different every day,” Collins said. “It’s so large and massive that every day is completely different, plus you just never know what you’re going to run into or who’s in town.”

Throughout his moves from city to city, USF has helped him form connections and kept him grounded. He started a USF alumni chapter in Kansas City and is already serving as vice chair of the New York City alumni group. He also credits the diversity he encountered at USF with expanding his perspective and helping him succeed in the business world.

“At a university overall, diversity is one of the ways USF has continued to prepare me,” he said.