discovery

research hits the road

Turf study teams students and faculty with the NFL

By Erin Ryan

Fourteen days, 13 nights, 5,244 miles, a half dozen hotels, dozens of restaurants, hundreds of songs on the radio we never want to hear again, the Rocky Mountains, the swamps of the Bayou, the plains of Kansas, the big cities, the small towns, various parking escapades with a 30-foot trailer and van, the sweltering heat and humidity of the southeastern U.S. in August, and we made it! We’re alive!

Blogging from the road last summer, Seth Kuhlman, Ben Cooper and Jackie Forhan summed up a scientific journey that put Boise State research on the map. They were alive and in possession of data that could change professional football where athletes’ feet meet the field.

Backed by an NFL research contract worth $135,641, mechanical engineer and Boise State graduate Kuhlman (BS, ’05, MS, ’07) designed and built a mechanical engineer Seth Kuhlman, Ben Cooper and Jackie Forhan presented a report to Boise State for 10 years and retiring in December 2002. During his time as a business professor, he had 26 articles published in refereed journals in the field of management communication. But none was more gratifying than his recent literary accomplishment.

As an emeritus faculty member, he teaches courses on India in the Honors College. One of Limaye’s students, senior Kim Price, helped research his paper, “Mruchhakatika (The Little Clay Cart) — a play written in India more than 1,600 years ago that he remembers well from his childhood — has been accepted for publication by Indian Literature, a journal of the National Academy of Letters of India.

Limaye was born and raised in India. His father loved literature and drama, and Limaye was exposed to it regularly while growing up. He earned undergraduate and master’s degrees in English literature, Sanskrit drama and economics in India. Then while working on his doctoral degree in the United States, he began teaching a couple of courses in advanced writing for executives. His career as a professor of business took off.

He taught in business schools at Colorado State University and the University of Texas before teaching at Boise State for 20 years and

Above: Researchers arrive at LP Field in Nashville, home of the Tennessee Titans. Left: Ben Cooper, Seth Kuhlman and Jackie Forhan pose with the 1,200-pound Turf Buster.

CULTURE, CAREER COME FULL CIRCLE

By Sherry Squires

“THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A DITCH IN FRONT OF A PERSON IN A HURRY.”

Mohan Limaye has taken this Indian proverb to heart. After teaching business courses for 25 years, the emeritus professor has returned to his first love, ancient Indian literature, and is finding that patience pays off.

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Thus, the shoes an athlete wears affect his potential for greater performance and for injury on artificial surfaces.

“More research needs to be conducted to identify shoe-surface combinations that truly maximize performance while minimizing injury risk,” Sabick says. “My first feeling with any research project is that you try to answer one question and open up 10 or 20 more.”

“It’s a complex problem, so the work we’re doing has just busted the door open. This project will yield results, but the biggest impact will come in the future,” adds Cooper.

For now, the Turf Buster team is setting an example of interdisciplinary, intergenerational collaboration.

“We have different perspectives and methods. That makes our research more interesting and stronger at the same time,” Sabick says, adding that even more than the group dynamic, hands-on experience is invaluable to cultivating the problem solvers of tomorrow. “The road trip allowed them to see the blood, sweat and tears it takes to do this kind of project.”

“There was a lot of sweat,” Cooper agrees, “but it has helped tremendously. You can learn in a book or a class all day long, but if you can’t see it applied, it’s hard to make those connections. It’s about being able to see the big picture.” ◆

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John Kelly