



Jorge Rojas, left, joins Diversity Management Fellows Tony Adame, (second from left), Monica Holland, Mike Wallace (back) and Peter Fuentes. APSE President Gerry Ahern and past president Mike Anastasi join the group in Indianapolis.

## Fellows get shot to run the show

BY REBECCA FITZGERALD

Michael Wallace is up for a new journalistic challenge.

The ESPN.com reporter and blogger entered the industry as a print journalist, covering news at the Shreveport (La.) Times. He solidified himself as a sports reporter and columnist at three additional newspapers.

In 2010, Wallace joined ESPN.com, following NBA action in his “Heat Index” blog.

After 15 years in journalism, Wallace is exploring another aspect of the industry. He is one of the four professional journalists selected to participate in the second annual APSE Diversity Fellowship, a nine-month program to prepare mid-career journalists for management positions.

Joining Wallace are Tony Adame, sports writer and copy editor of the Wichita Eagle; Peter Fuentes, copy editor for the Los Angeles News Group and Monica Holland, sports desk chief and outdoors editor for the Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer.

Given his writing background and his success, Wallace’s colleagues have questioned his interest in management.

“I think one way to be a better writer is to understand the management aspect of it and understand what happens to your stories as they go from what you write to the actual production process,” he said. “And I think one way to be a better editor is to be in the trenches with your writers.”

He sees opportunities to “bridge that gap” between writing and management and hopes to “find (his) niche somewhere between there.”

Wallace is unique because “he could go in any direction he wants to go,” said Jorge Rojas, APSE diversity chair and Wallace’s former boss at the Miami Herald.

Wallace and the other fellows worked with this year’s SJI class helping prepare stories for this publication. The Fellows also attend the APSE winter and summer conferences, Sports Management Program and a professional development day in each Fellow’s region.

Wallace expanded his horizons from his print journalism roots and although he “(hasn’t) wanted to jump around that much” he pursued his goals and chased it wherever they led.

“It’s been a great ride, it’s been a great journey,” he said.

# Despite poor score, APSE continues race to diversify

BY CAITLIN SWIECA

When it comes to diversity, APSE still has a long way to go.

That’s the finding of a study conducted by Richard Lapchick, director of the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at the University of Central Florida.

Overall, APSE was given a D+ on the 2012 Racial and Gender Report Card. That included a C+ in racial hiring practices and an F in gender hiring practices—the same grades APSE got in 2010, the last time the report was produced.

According to Curtis Walker, who assisted Lapchick, the study was compiled from self-reported demographic statistics that news organizations provided.

The report card, released March 1, showed that 90.9 percent of sports editors were white and 90.4 percent were male.

“I’d say that the APSE is the most interesting,” Walker said. “Although they receive poor grades each year, they continue to make the effort to try to diversify.”

The report suggested that APSE member institutions institute a rule similar to the Rooney Rule in the NFL, requiring there to be a diverse candidate pool for each key position opening.

“I’d recommend they make it their business to interview and hire someone and give them a chance,” Walker said. “A lot of people who are part of ESPN, they got that chance. The smaller organizations, just because they don’t have the name doesn’t mean they can’t hire someone from a different demographic. The question is, are they really trying?”

Some APSE editors suggest that increasing diversity statistics isn’t as simple as it sounds.

Michael Anastasi, vice president of Los Angeles News Group and founder of the APSE Diversity Fellowship Program, said that he has followed a Rooney Rule philosophy while making hires throughout his career.

“Unlike the NFL, APSE can’t mandate companies,” Anastasi said. “All we can do is educate editors and publishers and urge them to try to adopt these practices.”

Kathy Kudravi, CNN Sports editorial director and a member of the board of directors for the Association for Women in Sports Media, said she didn’t think a universal Rooney Rule would be the best way to increase diversity. “I can’t speak for every woman and every minority, but I can say that I would want to be considered for a position, not because I’m a woman, but because I’m the

best person for the job,” Kudravi said.

Jorge Rojas, Miami Herald executive sports editor and APSE Diversity chair, said he found the results of the report frustrating but also understood the circumstances that make it difficult to bring in more minorities and women.

“As one of the few and proud Hispanic sports editors, I can tell you what I’m mostly seeing is an organization that’s trying to do the right thing, and that’s got a lot of obstacles to overcome, whether it’s the inability to hire, keep or attract talented minorities, or the fact that women in particular may not want to work in parts of this field, specifically night editor or clerk,” Rojas said.

One large obstacle pointed out by Kudravi is the general lack of open jobs and movement within the industry. With the economy in general and media industry in particular struggling, there may not be as many opportunities for diverse candidates.

Rojas said the report did not mention any of APSE’s diversity initiatives, which include providing funding for the Sports Journalism Institute (for female and minority college students), sponsoring a Diversity Fellows program for mid-career professionals, and hosting an annual Day of Diversity at Hampton University.

The report noted that the primary source of progress since the 2010 report came from ESPN, which, as one of the few organizations able to increase hiring, has hired a number of minority sports editors and columnists. In a first-person piece for the Sports Business Daily, Lapchick wrote: “In each of the reports in 2006, 2008, 2010 and now, ESPN’s statistics for sports editors and columnists raised the numbers. Without their key hirings, the statistics would be even worse than they were in 2006.”

But Rojas points out, many of those women and minorities came up through APSE newspapers.

“They’ve, in essence, plucked the best and the brightest,” Rojas said. “All credit to ESPN, but I think that Dr. Lapchick placed an emphasis on ESPN’s success, and I think some of its success should be all of our success.”

Rojas said it is easier to hire a young minority candidate for an entry-level job, but change at the top will take more time.

“It has to come with the perspective of, you want to be building all the way from the ground up,” he said. “You don’t want to necessarily put someone on a fast track that isn’t ready for that fast track. It takes time to have people ready and in place.”