

STAYING CONNECTED TO HGSE

After five years serving on the Ed School's Alumni Council, chair **HANNA RODRIGUEZ-FARRAR, ED.M.'05, ED.D.'13**, will be ending her tenure. Rodriguez-Farrar, chief of staff to the president of Colgate University, spoke to *Ed.* about her current work, the pandemic, and why she chose to stay connected to Harvard.

In your role at Colgate, you get an insider's view of higher education. What's the biggest challenge colleges and universities will face once the pandemic recedes?

Prior to the pandemic, higher education was already grappling with numerous challenges, especially intense pressure on human and fiscal resources. Institutions were already struggling to improve access, opportunity, and outcomes for students. Many will need to

reassess their business models as they cannot simply afford to operate the way they did in 2019. How can they strengthen their commitment to their missions when almost every part of the institution is under strain?

How did your many years studying at the Ed School shape your career and your decision to focus on higher education?

At HGSE I identified where I wanted to make an impact and why. Specifically, I want to make a difference at a college or university because they changed the trajectory of my life. Reflecting on how my alma maters have affected my life has sustained me throughout this pandemic and during other hard times.

What initially made you get involved with the Alumni Council?

At the time I joined the alumni council, I was living in California. Joining the council was a way to stay connected to the Ed School when I was on the other side of the country.

Any advice for Ed School alumni, new or long-standing, who want to get involved and volunteer with the school but don't know where to start?

Start by perusing the alumni website for the kinds of opportunities that you can easily plug into, such as joining the HGSE social media sites or have a career conversation with a current student. The HGSE community is one of the school's greatest strengths, so commit to being proud of that community in the world. I think you'd be surprised how many HGSE grads are out there wanting to connect.

Hanna Rodriguez-Farrar at graduation in 2013

