Jessica Lynn Downing ALM '09

Jessica Downing began her career writing contracts twelve years ago. As an Air Force intern in Bedford, Massachusetts, she received countless hours of formal and on-the-job instruction to learn the art of Government contracting. Harnessing the strength of the community in which she lived, she further cultivated her love of contract negotiation by pursuing a Master's degree in Management from the Harvard Extension School (HES). As a full-time student and employee, Downing found herself working on procuring exciting Government systems by day and studying in the Harvard libraries by night.

Upon completion of her Master's degree, Downing spring-boarded into her next exciting career challenge at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) as a Contracting Officer. At DARPA, Downing worked with cutting-edge research and development academics, Government, and industry leaders in order to move their programs from ideas into legally binding contracts with companies and universities. During this time, Downing also served on the National Contracts Management Association (NCMA) Board of Directors for the Tyson's Chapter where she was the Director for Government Relations and the Director for the Contracts Management Leadership Development Program (CMLDP). As an NCMA board member, she brought to together contracting professionals in the Washington D.C. area for continuing professional development and peer support.

Fast forward seven years, Downing is ready to come back to HES and work together with the Alumni Affairs staff to plan and execute the beloved annual tradition, Alumni Weekend. Downing believes that her background in contract formation, program management, and previous board member experience will support the planning, organizing, and successful execution of this special event. "Harvard remains one of the most special communities I have had the privilege to be a part of and I plan to do all I can to bring HES alumni together so we can keep our traditions alive for years to come."