



Richard A. Carranza '91

Has been elected to membership in the

Beta Phi Hall of Honor

Class of 2019

Brother Richard Carranza, the grandson of Mexican immigrants, has risen to become the chancellor of the New York City Department of Education 28 years after graduation in 1991. He is responsible for educating 1.1 million students in more than 1,800 schools in the largest school system in the nation.

A son of a sheet metal worker and a hairdresser, he worked his way through Arizona's higher-education system, including the University of Arizona and Northern Arizona University. He is the twin brother of Reuben Carranza, who is also a member of the Hall of Honor, inducted in 2016.

Brother Carranza credits his public school education for putting him on the path to college and a successful career. At Pueblo High School, he and his brother took turns serving as president and vice president of their class all four years, graduating in the top 10 percent and earning scholarships.

In college, he immersed himself in UA campus life, including the Associated Students of the University of Arizona, the Minority Student Association, the Arizona Students' Association, and the Bobcats Senior Honorary. He pledged Beta Phi in 1986. With Richard managing his campaign, Reuben was elected student body president in 1987.

Brother Carranza earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in secondary education from the UA and a master of education with distinction in educational leadership from Northern Arizona University. He also completed his doctoral coursework in educational leadership through NAU and Nova Southeastern University.

During his nearly 30 years in education, he climbed the ladder quickly. Before assuming his New York City position, he was superintendent of the Houston Independent School District, the largest school district in Texas and the seventh largest in the United States. Before that, he served the San Francisco Unified School District, first as deputy superintendent and then as superintendent. Before moving to San Francisco, Brother Carranza was Northwest Region superintendent of the Clark County School District in Las Vegas. He began his career as a high school, bilingual, social studies, and music teacher before becoming a principal, both in Tucson, Arizona.

About his Sigma Chi experience, he said, "One of the proudest moments of life was when I was initiated into the Sigma Chi brotherhood. It is where I developed my inner confidence; my intellectual curiosity; and where I found others that believed in respect, honor, and hard work. I call them my brothers; others call them leaders. But together we proudly wear the cross with pride."