

# Harvard College Marathon Challenge

## Post-Event Survey Summary

### 2009

Questions/Complaints/Blame? E-Mail [marathon@harvard.edu](mailto:marathon@harvard.edu)

Website: <http://marathon.harvard.edu>

## **OVERVIEW: HARVARD COLLEGE MARATHON CHALLENGE (HCMC)**

Harvard College Marathon Challenge (HCMC) started in 2005. In 2008-09, HCMC participants raised money for Project HEALTH and Phillips Brooks House Association (PBHA), two charities that mean a great deal to many Harvard students and employees. In exchange for their successful fundraising efforts, HCMC participants receive official invitational entries (numbered bibs) to run in the Boston Marathon. These invitation entries allow participants to run the Boston Marathon at their own pace; they are exempt from the time-qualifying requirement by virtue of their charitable fundraising efforts. This year, HCMC participants raised over \$30,000 to benefit PBHA and Project HEALTH.

To ensure diversity, HCMC participants were selected by a process that took into account student vs. staff status, year of graduation, residential affiliation, past PBHA/Project HEALTH involvement, gender, previous running/marathon experience, and especially demonstrated prior commitment to the HCMC program. Each participant paid a nonrefundable registration fee and met several interim fundraising benchmarks, culminating in a final fundraising benchmark that ranged from \$1000 for participants who joined very late to \$2500 for undergraduate "veteran" participants.

Throughout the months prior to the Marathon, participants used the HCMC listserv as arrange training runs and to discuss a wide range of training, fundraising, and related issues. In addition to the listserv, HCMC held several brief meetings. Notwithstanding the meetings and fundraising benchmarks, participants were free to choose and vary over time their levels of involvement in HCMC's training, fundraising, and community-building activities.

In the weeks following the Boston Marathon, HCMC participants were invited to complete an online survey that asked about their overall HCMC experiences. Thirteen of nineteen HCMC participants (68%) responded. What follows are:

- the survey instrument (pp. 2-3)
- a respondent table linking respondents with their answers to the closed-ended questions (p. 4)
- a statistical summary of responses to the closed-ended questions (p. 5)
- responses to all the open-ended questions, edited only as necessary to protect privacy and to correct obvious spelling and typographical errors (pp. 6-23).

## 2009 HCMC POST-MARATHON SURVEY – SURVEY QUESTIONS

### INSTRUCTIONS (please read):

As an official Harvard College Marathon Challenge (HCMC) participant, you put forth a tremendous amount of effort training, fundraising, and (for those who weren't injured or ill) running the Marathon. You sacrificed a great deal to make HCMC become a reality for yourself, and you should feel proud! It is in this spirit that we ask you to take the time to complete this survey while HCMC is still fresh in your mind (and in your body!). To ensure your responses are as complete and lucid as possible, please take this survey when your mind is clear and you're not feeling rushed or preoccupied with other pressing things.

When responding to the questions below, please be as specific, honest, and realistic as possible. Know with certainty that no egos will be bruised or damaged as a result of anything you write, so please don't sugar-coat your negative or constructive feedback. Likewise, please feel fully comfortable sharing the depth and breadth of your positive sentiments. It's perfectly fine if some of your answers are redundant, and it's also okay to go off on tangents. The "Golden Rule" when completing this survey is to *please elaborate rather than edit yourself, because hearing more from you is better than hearing less from you! We're interested in unique perspectives just as much as the patterns/themes that are shared among HCMC participants.*

The results will be available after they've been compiled.

THANK YOU in advance for your thoughtful remarks and valuable time! Your feedback really *is* important and really *does* matter, especially to future HCMC participants. Remember, HCMC is *always* a work in progress!

1. Thinking back, what initially led you to participate in HCMC?
2. Please reflect upon your overall HCMC experience [Note: "overall HCMC experience" encompasses everything from the time you joined HCMC through Marathon Day].
3. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *general mood*?
4. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *self-perception (confidence, self-worth, perceived abilities, etc.)*?
5. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *time management and organizational skills*?
6. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *academic performance (or job performance, if you're an employee)*?
7. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *drinking (alcohol) and partying*?
8. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect you *otherwise (eating, sleeping, daily routine, social relationships, general thinking, etc.– whatever)*?
9. If I had to go back and decide again, I [**would; would not**] have participated in HCMC this past year.
10. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being your *absolute worst* actual Harvard experience so far and 10 being your *very best* actual Harvard experience so far, how would you rate your overall HCMC experience?
11. What was the *best* part of your HCMC experience, and what made it so great?
12. What was the *worst* part of your HCMC experience, why was it so bad, and how could it have been better?
13. In retrospect, what (if anything) could/would/should *you* have done differently to improve your HCMC experience?
14. In the future, what can *HCMC* do to improve?

## 2009 HCMC POST-MARATHON SURVEY – SURVEY QUESTIONS

15. HCMC has three stated purposes: (i) training for the Boston Marathon, (ii) fundraising for PBHA and Project HEALTH, and (iii) building a running community. Hearing this, what (if anything) comes to mind in light of your own HCMC experience this past year?
16. Please comment on the listserv (e.g., whether being required to post 2 runs/week was useful, why you did or didn't feel comfortable posting to the listserv, how the listserv was most or least useful to you, etc.).
17. Please share any comments you have about the specific deals that various businesses offered us (e.g., the New Balance discount, the fruit shakes at b.good).
18. What brief advice or words of wisdom would you give to potential HCMC participants?
19. Please describe any mental or physical strategies that you used on Marathon Day, either before or during your run (for example, adhering to a particular running-to-walking ratio, thinking motivating thoughts, working the crowd, saying positive things to yourself, visualizing certain images, performing a pre-Marathon ritual or routine, etc.). Be as specific as possible.
20. What else is on your mind about HCMC? Radical ideas, idiosyncrasies, comments about the afterparty, the care you received at UHS, etc. – anything goes!
21. I paid the HCMC Registration Fee and/or set up my personal fundraising page [**before; after**] January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year.
22. This was the [**1<sup>st</sup>; 2<sup>nd</sup>; 3<sup>rd</sup>; 4<sup>th</sup> or more**] year in which I was an official HCMC participant.
23. Please tell us if you crossed the Boston Marathon Starting Line this year and, if so, whether you crossed the Finish Line. [**I crossed both the Starting Line & the Finish Line; I crossed the Starting Line, but I didn't finish; I didn't run the Boston Marathon this year**]
24. Would you ever run another full marathon (26.2 miles) again? [**definitely; probably; 50/50; doubtful; no way!**]
25. If you were offered a slot in next year's Harvard College Marathon Challenge, would you accept it? [**I won't be at Harvard next year (ineligible); definitely; probably; 50/50; doubtful; no way!**]
26. Partly or wholly as a result of my HCMC participation, I will volunteer with PBHA or Project Health. [**I won't be at Harvard next year (N/A); nope; doubtful; probably; definitely; I already do & will continue to volunteer with PBHA or Project HEALTH**]
27. My current Harvard College affiliation is [**1-FR=freshman; 2-SO=sophomore; 3-JR=junior; 4-SR=senior; 5-PR=proctor; 6-TU=resident tutor; 7-RD=resident dean; 8-OG=other Harvard grad student; 9-OE=other Harvard employee; 10-NA=none of the above**].
28. What's your name (optional)? [If you self-identify and fully completed this survey, you'll automatically be eligible to win a pair of movie tickets or a restaurant gift certificate.]
29. If you provided your name, may we attribute your comments to you when reporting survey results? [**yes; no; I didn't provide my name**]

*Before clicking "Submit," please ask yourself if you were honest, specific, realistic, and thorough in your answers. If you weren't, could you please revise your answers accordingly?*

**THANKS AGAIN!**

**SUBMIT**

**Reset**

2009 HCMC POST-MARATHON SURVEY – RESPONDENT TABLE &  
CLOSED-ENDED QUESTION RESPONSES

*Important Note:* The respondent numbers in the left column of this table correspond with the response numbers throughout the rest of this document, so you can track responses with specific respondents throughout the document.

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Question 9</b> <i>Would have done HCMC if I had to re-decide</i>	<b>Question 10</b> <i>Overall rating, 1=worst, 10=best</i>	<b>Question 21</b> <i>Joined HCMC before/after January 1<sup>st</sup></i>	<b>Question 22</b> <i># of years doing HCMC</i>	<b>Question 23</b> <i>Crossed Start Line/ Finish Line</i>	<b>Question 24</b> <i>Desire to run another marathon</i>	<b>Question 25</b> <i>Desire to run with HCMC next year</i>	<b>Question 26</b> <i>Will become more involved w/charities</i>	<b>Question 27</b> <i>Harvard College affiliation</i>
1	yes	9	before	1	yes/yes	probably	definitely	already	sophomore
2	yes	7	after	1	yes/yes	doubtful	50/50	already	sophomore
3	yes	9	before	1	yes/yes	probably	probably	already	tutor
4	yes	9	before	2	yes/yes	definitely	probably	already	junior
5	yes	9	before	1	yes/yes	definitely	probably	already	sophomore
6	yes	8	before	1	yes/yes	probably	doubtful	no	junior
7	yes	7	before	1	no/no	definitely	definitely	already	sophomore
8	yes	8	after	1	yes/yes	probably	probably	already	sophomore
9	yes	8	after	1	yes/yes	probably	probably	already	freshman
10	yes	9	before	1	yes/yes	definitely	definitely	probably	sophomore
11	yes	7	before	1	no/no	definitely	definitely	doubtful	junior
12	yes	8	before	1	yes/yes	definitely	definitely	already	freshman
13	yes	9	before	1	yes/yes	definitely	definitely	already	sophomore

**Results summary for closed-ended questions (n=13 respondents):**

9. If I had to go back and decide again, I [**would=100%; would not=0%**] have participated in HCMC this past year.
10. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being your *absolute worst* actual Harvard experience so far and 10 being your *very best* actual Harvard experience so far, how would you rate your overall HCMC experience? **mean rating = 8.23**
21. I paid the HCMC Registration Fee and/or set up my personal fundraising page [**before=77%; after=23%**] January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year.
22. This was the [**1<sup>st</sup>=8%, 2<sup>nd</sup>=92%; 3<sup>rd</sup>=0%; 4<sup>th</sup> or more=0%**] year in which I was an official HCMC participant.
23. I [**did=85%; did not=15%**] cross the Boston Marathon Finish Line this year. *[The 2 respondents who did not cross the Finish Line chose not to run the Marathon at all. Therefore, all respondents who crossed the Starting Line also crossed the Finish Line.]*
24. Would you ever run another full marathon (26.2 miles) again? [**definitely=54%; probably=39%; 50/50=0%; doubtful=7%; no way!=0%**]
25. If you were offered a slot in next year's Harvard College Marathon Challenge, would you accept it? [**ineligible=0%; definitely=46%; probably=39%; 50/50=7%; doubtful=7%; no way!=0%**] *[Rounding makes the total less than 100%.]*
26. Partly or wholly as a result of my HCMC participation, I will volunteer with PBHA or Project Health. [**I won't be at Harvard next year (N/A)=0%; nope=7%; doubtful=7%; probably=7%; definitely=0%; I already do & will continue to volunteer with PBHA or Project HEALTH=77%**] *[Rounding makes the total less than 100%.]*
27. My current Harvard College affiliation is [**1-FR=freshman=16%; 2-SO=sophomore=54%; 3-JR=junior=23%; 4-SR=senior=0%; 5-PR=proctor=0%; 6-TU=resident tutor=7%; 7-RD=resident dean=0%; 8-OG=other Harvard grad student=0%; 9-OE=other Harvard employee=0%; 10-NA=none of the above=0%**]

**1. Thinking back, what initially led you to participate in HCMC?**

1. I really wanted to run the Boston Marathon, and when I found out I could and raise money for charity, it sounded like a terrific program.
2. I really enjoyed running with people from the listserve, and I wanted to run the Boston Marathon some time before I graduated. This year, I thought I had time to do the training necessary to make it happen.
3. the unique opportunity to the run the boston marathon as my first marathon, whilst raising money for good causes, and challenging myself to get in shape
4. I really wanted to finish the Boston marathon!
5. I've wanted to run a marathon for a few years and this seemed like a great way to run a really exciting marathon!
6. I was inspired to participate in HCMC after seeing friends participate and run the marathon last year. Marathon day last year was definitely the day I decided to run this year.
7. To run the Boston Marathon—I might not get another chance in life!
8. I wanted to run my first marathon, and I heard from a friend that I could run the Boston Marathon through Harvard.
9. I learned about it through the pre-frosh run, and I had always wanted to run a marathon. Simultaneously my mom was training to run her first marathon in hopes of qualifying for boston. These things kind of just conspired and gave me the idea that it might be really fun to do it.
10. Watching my friend finish last year opened my eyes to what a crazy event the Boston Marathon is.
11. I have always dreamed of running a marathon - and the opportunity to do it within the Harvard "running" community was extremely appealing.
12. Primarily, my frustration over not making it onto Harvard's [name redacted] team. I never thought I would ever want to run a marathon before I tried out, but when the coach emailed me to say I hadn't made the cut, he suggested that I check out the HCMC program. I was already on the listserv, but I guess that was the moment when I decided to take the plunge and sign up for a marathon slot. I wanted some kind of challenge and team experience to motivate my running, and the marathon challenge seemed to provide that.
13. Talking to two former HCMC participants first made me interested in HCMC last spring. Before that, I had always imagined it was not something normal people could do. I had also run cross-country and track in high school, and didn't do much running my freshman year, so I wanted to get back into running.

**2. Please reflect upon your *overall* HCMC experience [Note: "*overall HCMC experience*" encompasses everything from the time you joined HCMC through Marathon Day].**

1. It was great. The best part about it was probably the structure; the fundraising pages and process through [name redacted] were very official and standardized, but I really liked the unstructured nature of the marathon listserv and the idea that we can train when we want without being bogged down by specified commitments. I do wish there were more chances to meet more of the runners before race day, but I suppose if I post runs at 7 a.m. I shouldn't expect a stampede to join me.
2. It was pretty wonderful. Being part of the group training for the marathon was great. Marathon day was both incredibly exciting and incredibly challenging.
3. loved the whole experience. i'm going to miss it.
4. I love the community, the listserv, and, of course, race day itself. The experience with HCMC was great.
5. It was great!
6. The experience has been great. The community of runners was essential for my training and I've really felt motivated running for charity. I would not have wanted to do the marathon any other way.
7. I found the fundraising stressful at times, but the runs themselves more than made up for it.
8. I enjoyed training with others, and I loved running for an organization and charity in which I was personally involved.
9. My overall experience was great. I met awesome people. I had partners for long runs. I got to know some of the other runners well. I would've loved to have had even more contact with other runners though.
10. In retrospect, I would have liked to have put more effort into the pre-marathon portion of my HCMC experience. It would have been nice not only to have had a slightly more structured training plan, but also to have spent more time with the other runners in a non-running setting: spag. dinners, things of the like...
11. Great - love the supportive and enthusiastic community.
12. Overall, it has been a good experience. I would have liked to run with more people on the listserv, although I certainly got to meet people through runs posted there and had more running buddies as a result. The marathon is an incredible experience, and right now the memory of that fresh in my mind makes me think of the experience with overwhelmingly positive feelings.
13. I had a great experience with HCMC! I wish I had gotten to know the other participants better, although the reason I didn't was mostly my own fault. Marathon Day was a fantastic experience; it was so wonderful to have other people to hang out with before the race, and to run with some at least for a portion of it.

**3. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *general mood*?**

1. It absolutely provided a goal for the entire semester. Fundraising and training were important, and both of these aspects gave me a lot of motivation to work hard, succeed and prepare for the big day. Overall, HCMC enhanced my mood and allowed me to goal-orient toward something other than academics.
2. Sometimes my runs picked me up during a tough day or week, and I've made a few friends among the group, so those have both helped.
3. hard to say, but it probably improved or stabilized my mood. when i was injured and not running i was definitely in a funk.
4. I think running and telling people that I was going to run the marathon really helped my mood.
5. I felt that there was a community behind my efforts. I loved being able to post questions to the listserv and receive many helpful responses!
6. I was generally really happy and grounded with my regular training runs. It was always good to know I'd have people to run with or just to talk about training with.
7. I got super psyched for the marathon, which definitely made me happier. Also, I've always used running to cope with any personal problems, so HCMC helped in that sense, too.
8. The experience helped me find balance in my day-to-day experience at Harvard.
9. I would say it made me a happier person in general. Every once in a while I got stressed out trying to fit a long run into a busy schedule, but meeting other runners on long runs made me extremely happy. It also gave me something to train for, giving me a reason for much needed breaks from studying which I might not have taken otherwise (thus saving my sanity)
10. It made me feel extra happy and satisfied with myself.
11. Improved! I love that everyone is aiming for the same general goal.
12. Running regularly certainly helps me de-stress and feel generally good. Particularly near the time of the marathon, it was nice to feel like a part of a smaller friendly marathon community.
13. Going on runs definitely improved my mood. After a long, stressful week, the weekly long runs definitely refreshed me.

**4. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *self-perception (confidence, self-worth, perceived abilities, etc.)*?**

1. Being able to do a marathon certainly improves your confidence and perceived abilities. I think it mainly just showed that if you commit the time, talent, energy and dedication to a project as ambitious as HCMC, your experience will be as rewarding as make it to be.
2. I ran a marathon. That's a pretty good accomplishment that I can be proud of, but I'm not sure it'll make a huge difference in my day-to-day thoughts about myself.
3. it improved my perception and the reality of my running abilities. other than that, who knows...
4. Running the marathon definitely boosted my confidence.
5. I don't think that it really changed much, though I felt empowered in having the marathon as a goal.
6. I felt a lot better being able to gauge my progress (or lack thereof) with other trainees. It helped to keep everything in perspective and overall I felt really good about myself.
7. I felt better about myself whenever someone would praise me for my HCMC participation.
8. Completing the Boston Marathon was one of the most rewarding moments of my life, giving me a new sense of confidence and belief in myself.
9. I didn't really. I guess I kind of surprised myself that I could run that far, but in the long run it didn't really change it.
10. It solidified my existing perception of myself as a person who can achieve goals through hard work.
11. I think participation gave me better perspective about obstacles - about changing goals and focusing on the smaller accomplishments. I have learned patience!
12. I wouldn't say it affected my self-perception that much, but it is pretty exciting now to be able to say that I can run a marathon.
13. I think it improved my confidence-to know that I CAN finish 26.2 miles!

**5. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *time management and organizational skills*?**

1. I already consider myself fairly organized and a proficient time manager, but attempting to schedule morning runs 3-5 days a week definitely made me more carefully plan my days and times.
2. Well, time management for the semester was made that much trickier, it probably didn't really teach me that much new though.
3. definitely improved time management.
4. Having to wake up early and plan around long runs definitely made me more efficient and better at planning my school work.
5. Running regularly definitely makes me a more effective worker, though I wasn't able to really work for the couple of days leading up to the marathon due to my excitement and inability to focus on anything not marathon related.
6. I definitely improved in my time management. Running forced me to line everything else up and keep to a regular schedule.
7. I kept the same general workout schedule as I did last year (when I didn't do HCMC), so this was not a huge impact. However, HCMC did make me run with a bit more consistency.
8. Setting aside time to run in the mornings forced me to manage my time more efficiently so I could finish my work on time.
9. I had to be a bit more on top of doing what I had to do efficiently, so that was helpful, but I feel I probably wouldn't have acted that much differently otherwise as I have always been a busy person who needs to manage time well to fit it all in.
10. It did not, since I didn't exercise these skills in my experience.
11. I didn't notice a change.
12. Not sure if it really affected them. It did provide more structure to my day than some of my friends who weren't running regularly had.
13. I already had good time management and organizational skills. Participating in HCMC forced me to exercise every day and make time for exercise, so in that regard, it caused me to manage my time in a way that prioritized regular exercise.

**6. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *academic performance (or job performance, if you're an employee)*?**

1. It probably improved my academic performance, as HCMC always gave me an excuse to be active and doing something, as opposed to procrastinating work and activities.
2. I might have had a little less time for academics, but really I think it just made me more focused when I was working on them.
3. no change or slight positive change
4. I am not sure that it actually helped my academic performance except that I definitely got better at managing my time.
5. I don't think so.
6. I would say my academic performance stayed the same. There may have been times when I missed a class or did a bit less work on a paper in order to train, but I wouldn't say that my performance suffered overall.
7. Running has always helped me maintain an efficient work schedule; HCMC only aided this trend.
8. N/A
9. I would say that it didn't really. Maybe during the week after the marathon when I was recovering/spending a lot of time with my family who was still in town.
10. No effect.
11. I didn't notice a change.
12. no effect that I can see (although, as I've noticed in the past, running helps me to think more clearly and, sometimes, more insightfully/creatively. I come up with some of my best sentences/ideas/rhetorical devices when I'm thinking on my runs, and I remember these ideas remarkably clearly.)
13. I don't think it had any effect on my academic performance.

**7. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect your *drinking (alcohol) and partying*?**

1. It did not dramatically affect my partying, but as race day approached, I definitely scaled back my social involvement (late nights) to be able to concentrate on morning trainings.
2. It didn't. I don't drink or really do that kind of partying anyways, so this made no difference.
3. drank less. partied less. i'm an old man, though.
4. Other than taking it easy the weekend before the race and sometimes the night before long runs, it didn't really affect my partying.
5. I don't drink much to begin with, but I totally cut out drinking during the last two weeks.
6. I partied (and drank) a little bit less during training. I think it was a good thing. I went to bed a little earlier on the weekends and overall felt better in the morning when I got up and ran than I would have after a night of partying.
7. I stopped drinking in January, but I've felt so healthy since that I will likely drink less from now on.
8. N/A
9. I definitely went out less and did not stay out as long when I did. You just can't go out late and expect to do a long run well the next morning, and if you wait to do a long run in the afternoon on the weekend, then your day is gone.
10. Generally the effect was negligible, since I'm not an extreme partier. The week before the marathon, however, showed an extreme decline in all activities outside homework and sleeping.
11. I stopped drinking alcohol last Spring, when I became more serious about my running.
12. no effect
13. I don't drink or party, so it did not have an effect.

**8. How, if at all, did participating in the overall HCMC experience affect you *otherwise* (eating, sleeping, daily routine, social relationships, general thinking. etc.– whatever)?**

1. It was a great talking point and something very unique at Harvard. Many people hadn't heard about the program, and it impressed them to know that Harvard and certain students were willing to commit
2. I think I ate more healthily during training. I think that the regular physical exercise was very good for me, and it was nice to have a routine, to some extent, that I could rely on.
3. running was a nice, stabilizing part of my daily routine and life.
4. I definitely ate a more healthy diet and made new friends from the listserv.
5. I don't think so.
6. I had to maybe sacrifice a little bit of my personal relationships in order to focus on running, but I also made some new friends with HCMC.
7. I stopped eating greasy foods from the Dhall, and started to feel better on a day-to-day basis because of it.
8. Participating in HCMC helped me pay more attention to what I eat and how much I sleep each day.
9. I gained a lot of respect from my friends for going through the long training process and actually running the marathon which was unexpected. It was also cool to have so many people supporting me in donating, even if it was just five dollars!
10. Again, not much effect.
11. It was nice to find another group to become involved with.
12. no effect
13. HCMC forced me to exercise daily, which I ended up doing in the mornings. This helped me create a regular schedule of sleeping and exercising. I learned too late, however, that regular training is not an excuse to eat everything.

**11. What was the *best* part of your HCMC experience, and what made it so great?**

1. I honestly really enjoyed the early-morning runs through Boston/Cambridge. I wish more people would have participated, but it allowed me to escape the proverbial Harvard bubble and become acquainted with communities so proximately close but socially distant. Also, race day/post-race dinner/desserts/massages were fantastic! Really enjoyed recounting experiences and meeting the others! [Name redacted], finally, is another terrific asset of HCMC, as he brings a ton of energy, excitement and enthusiasm to the program. It's also evident how much (voluntary) work he puts in to the program.
2. Training runs, both with and without company, were just tons of fun.
3. the marathon itself -- thanks to the crowd and the intensity of the experience.
4. Running the marathon and seeing all those friendly faces on the course.
5. The marathon itself. I can't describe how amazing it was. I had a blast from the moment it began to crossing the finish. I got sad at mile 22 when I realized that it would soon end.
6. Running with other Harvard students was definitely the best part. I really got the sense that finishing the marathon was a collective goal for us, and that it didn't matter in what time we finished, which is a big difference from other running groups which might be more "hardcore" or competitive.
7. Going out every Sunday for my long run knowing that I would set a personal record for longest distance run--I loved pushing my limits.
8. The best part was running the Boston Marathon. The experience was surreal and I was truly inspired.
9. The best part was simply being introduced to awesome people and interesting running routes. I can't imagine doing my long runs without such great people to talk to and make the miles pass quickly.
10. the actual marathon. I had no idea it would be so much fun!
11. Running with other on Sunday afternoons! The sunshine, the shared goal, and the support...
12. The marathon itself was the best. I've never had an experience like it before in my life. The crowd support is unbelievable, the endorphin high after the run is amazing, and the sense of accomplishment that comes from completing a marathon is unlike any other I can think of.
13. The best part was Marathon Day! It was so wonderful to have all the work--fundraising and training alike--of the past few months pay off.

**12. What was the *worst* part of your HCMC experience, why was it so bad, and how could it have been better?**

1. There were no terrible or worst parts of the experience.
2. The last two miles of the marathon. My legs just couldn't take it anymore. Maybe better training or a different race strategy would have helped, but I did what I could, and it was just tough.
3. getting injured and fearing i would not be able to complete the marathon.
4. I don't think there was a really bad part of the experience. Sometimes fundraising was tough, but it wasn't terrible.
5. Being nervous about reaching my fundraising goal. But as soon as I started to ask for the money, it came flooding in and no one should be discouraged from running because of the funding. You CAN raise the funds! This doesn't really answer this question, but fundraising turned out to be a great aspect of the process. It felt like christmas every time that I received another donation.
6. Raising money was difficult with the state of the economy, but in the end it wasn't a huge problem. I think people will still contribute to good causes like this one, so I wouldn't change anything about the fundraising process.
7. Spraining my ankle a week before the marathon--not sure how I could make that any better.
8. N/A
9. I can't think of any bad experiences with it!
10. Raising money. It's just hard to ask people for money, even though it's to support me and the great causes we work for. I don't think there's any way around that.
11. My injury (although not HCMC related) - I wish I had been more decisive about my plans not to run.
12. training in the winter. Miserable! Maybe more advice from east coast veterans would have been helpful, but I think this was unavoidable. Running in Boston is simply not as nice as running in California!
13. The worst part wasn't really that bad, but I would have to say the fundraising. Asking people for money, at least for me, was and continues to be difficult since it's all out of my own control and effort. In addition, when I asked people for money, the marathon was several months away. I managed to raise the required amount thanks to many generous donors who I wrote emails to. I'm not sure how this could have been better, and it is definitely part [text ended]

**13. In retrospect, what (if anything) could/would/should you have done differently to improve your HCMC experience?**

1. I enjoyed the first semester 'meet-and-greet,' and I would have enjoyed a similar second-semester get-together to allow everyone to become reacquainted.
2. I absolutely should have tried to get to know even more of the HCMC runners!
3. not talked to a crimson reported afterward, or insisted on an email interview -- man, they really deserve their reputation.
4. I would have liked to set up more marathon meals or group activities during the year.
5. I would have taken more advantage of the long group runs.
6. I should have been more regular about my training. I also shouldn't have been playing basketball so much and risking injury, which is what happened to me and set my training back by a few weeks.
7. I would have gone on more long runs (injury mandated I pare back my training schedule). I would also have done a Wellesley run or two.
8. I would have trained more with other HCMC members.
9. I would've trained more consistently before officially getting a spot because the last four miles were extremely difficult and I think if I had gotten a few more long runs in it wouldn't have been as bad.
10. Perhaps more interaction with the listserv and the other HCMC participants.
11. Set more reasonable, non-time related goals.
12. I probably should have tried harder to get to know the other HCMC runners earlier on in the training process.
13. I think I would have tried to get to know the other participants earlier and spent more time with them. I started to meet (and eventually get to know) some participants closer to the marathon, which was great, but I wish I had started earlier. I also probably would have watched my diet a little more...rather than using training as an excuse to eat more.

**14. In the future, what can *HCMC* do to improve?**

1. I'd love to see maybe one group meeting each semester (more than that and people have other commitments/get busy, etc). Also, since there are a lot of non-marathon people on the e-mail list, it *might* be nice (not totally convinced) to have a separate listserv just for HCMC runners, since a lot of details just apply to them and not the list. It might be fun too to find a time to take the Marathoners out one weekend to work on a PBHA project (though I know people are always so busy!).
2. Anything to facilitate more interaction between runners would be great!
3. more leg massages!
4. It would be nice if HCMC had more group meetings or events because the people who run are so great.
5. Have more events to get to know other runners. I would have been more apt to join runs that had been posted to the listserv if I had known other participants. Though it was fun to connect faces to names on the actual marathon day, though not ideal.
6. Can't think of anything big right now. Overall a great experience.
7. I never found a consistent training partner--maybe HCMC could do some more personalized matching.
8. HCMC could organize more social events so members could get to know each other outside of running.
9. I know people have said this in the past and it really will just take someone to organize it, but it would be awesome to have more events where we could get to know everyone, rather than just people we run at the same pace as. Also, it might be fun to have a set morning run (like tufts) where the community could come together regularly.
10. I see no areas in need of improvement.
11. I wish that maybe once a month the group of runners met for a meal - something more organized.
12. Perhaps more officially scheduled social gatherings?
13. It would be nice if HCMC could sponsor a few (more than 1) introductory meetings/events. I felt like I never really saw any of the other participants after the first meeting...until very close to the marathon. Otherwise, great job!

**15. HCMC has three stated purposes: (i) training for the Boston Marathon, (ii) fundraising for PBHA and Project HEALTH, and (iii) building a running community. Hearing this, what (if anything) comes to mind in light of your own HCMC experience this past year?**

1. I feel like we accomplished all three.
2. Well, I think all three of those happened.
3. it accomplishes all three.
4. I think that HCMC does a great job of this, although I think there could be much more of a running community.
5. HCMC did an excellent job of this!
6. See above. All three of those things were equally satisfied for me.
7. I'm fairly devoted to PBHA, and would like to see more interaction between HCMC participants and the two charities.
8. HCMC accomplished all three!
9. it definitely does all three. See above about the potential for increasing the community.
10. While it might be nice to see the HCMC more enthusiastically supporting the running community, I don't think that it would be fair to make that a point of obligation for the participants. I, for one, was very thankful for the 'flexibility' of the pre-marathon responsibilities during the tougher points in the semester.
11. Totally agree! Well done emphasizing all three.
12. Nothing is coming to mind
13. The first two purposes are definitely true, and the third purpose is true to some extent. I felt that more community could have been built that would have been assisted by more in-person meetings.

**16. Please comment on the listserv (e.g., whether being required to post 2 runs/week was useful, why you did or didn't feel comfortable posting to the listserv, how the listserv was most or least useful to you, etc.)**

1. I liked posting to the listserv, although towards the end of the year I became less frequent since it became obvious that few, if any, people would run with me on my runs (although I ran at 7 a.m., which is probably not the most popular time with college students!). I felt comfortable posting to the listserv and felt it was a very supportive environment.
2. Sometimes I had difficulty planning my runs far enough in advance to feel comfortable posting them to the listserv, but I definitely think that encouraging this is an important part of building an HCMC community.
3. I posted at first but no one showed up, so then I read but did not participate too much. I loved Daniel Lieberman's responses to questions, and felt the support even if it was mainly electronic.
4. I felt comfortable posting to the listserv, but people rarely joined me on runs.
5. My complaint about the listserv is that others rarely joined my posted runs. I felt like I was just fulfilling a duty as people rarely joined me.
6. Toward the end I wanted to run individually and not have to post to the list, but I understand why posting is important to the community aspect of the HCMC. Mostly it was not a hassle.
7. The 2 post/week definitely made me post more often than I would have. I would like to see HCMC use the harvardruns website that [name redacted] made--seems like a more efficient way to meet up with fellow runners.
8. I thought that the training advice and race day tips were very helpful for me. I think responding to posts on the list was a great way to learn new routes.
9. It was good for me to be forced to plan ahead when I was going to get my runs in. It kept me organized because of this. I thought it was helpful especially at the end when learning about pre and post-race procedures. It is also just an indispensable part of what makes us a community I feel.
10. If anything, runners simply need to take it upon themselves to use the listserv as effectively as they can. While cutting off all obligations to post runs would inevitably result in a lack of usage, making too many requirements about posting and training would also drive busy participants away from the program. I think it's at a comfortable place right now; I just would have personally liked to have made more efforts to post runs and events...
11. The requirement was not all that useful - I think there were weeks when I posted much more than other weeks - but I do love the information that went out.
12. I like the listserv. At first I was a little worried about going on runs with complete strangers, but after meeting people at the runs during opening days, I found the HCMC people to be very open and friendly. That made me less nervous about going on runs with random people who posted.
13. The listserv was great for having questions answered! It was great to have so many dedicated, experienced runners willing to share their advice (and often write lengthy, thoughtful emails!) In general, nobody replied to me to join my runs; this may have been the time of my runs. I learned to find a running buddy before posting to the list, because there was a risk that no one would reply.

**17. Please share any comments you have about the specific deals that various businesses offered us (e.g., the New Balance discount, the fruit shakes at b.good.).**

1. I think they're really great, although I never took advantage of the deals (my fault, not anyone at HCMC).
2. Oh man, B.Good is my favorite thanks to that deal!!! The New Balance thing never seemed relevant because of the 50% off coupons that you can get, and I think we have a discount at Marathon Sports, but even so, I never really needed to shop there.
3. went in for the fruit shakes at b.good and they gave me a funny look... that was at the beginning, though.
4. The deals a great, especially fruit shakes at b good and the discount at marathon sports!
5. Loved the shakes, though I should have gone more often!
6. New Balance discount got me my shoes and b.good kept me happy after my runs. Keep up the awesome deals!
7. I never went to get shakes, simply because I would run, lift, then eat in the dhall. Also, new balance shoes just don't work for my feet.
8. N/A
9. I had a few shakes at b.good which were refreshing and made me get in there more often otherwise as well (I guess the deal did what it was supposed to). I didn't take advantage of any of the other deals though.
10. They were amazing! I took full advantage of all of our perks!
11. No comments.
12. Love the fruit shakes!!!
13. The 50% discount coupon at New Balance was really nice! To be honest, I only got the fruit shake at b.good once, but mainly because my runs never really went by b. good.

**18. What brief advice or words of wisdom would you give to potential HCMC participants?**

1. You don't need to be a natural runner to run with HCMC. All you require is a dedication to sustained training and a commitment to work toward this common goal.
2. Definitely give it a try, and don't set your expectations too high for race day! Enjoy the whole experience, training, meeting people, having delicious B.Good smoothies, and running the marathon!
3. neither the training nor the race is as hard as you expect them to be... do it!
4. Have fun on marathon day! It's an amazingly moving event, and all those people are there for you!
5. Just do it!!
6. If you have ever thought about running the Boston marathon (or any marathon) and think you might be interested in doing it while you're at school, apply to run with HCMC. It really does not take up a ton of time and there's no better way to run with friends, meet new people, and have a terrific, low-pressure marathon experience.
7. You CAN run in the winter! I'm from Hawaii and I ran outside all throughout January, February, March--don't let the weather stop you.
8. Smile and enjoy yourself during the marathon, and don't take your time too seriously.
9. Go on runs with as many different people as you can be posting/responding to the listserv; it's the most awesome part. Also, run places that aren't the river.
10. Be willing to be in the necessary amount of time and effort in order to get the full value out of the experience. In addition, make sure you take the time to really consider exactly how much time and effort will be required.
11. Trust your body.
12. Although the idea of running a marathon or raising a ton of money is intimidating, it really is not that impossible to do either of these things. The reward at the end far outweighs any of the difficulties leading up to the big day.
13. You can do it! Have fun!

**19. Please describe any mental or physical strategies that you used on Marathon Day, either before or during your run (for example, adhering to a particular running-to-walking ratio, thinking motivating thoughts, working the crowd, saying positive things to yourself, visualizing certain images, performing a pre-Marathon ritual or routine, etc.).**

1. I drank a Gatorade, stretched quite a bit, ate a Gu and was at peace in my mind. I also kept a folded sheet of paper of all my marathon contributors in my shorts pocket, and that was as motivating as the awesome crowd along the way.
2. Seeing family and friends along the race route was great. The crowds at Wellesley and especially B.C. were wonderful! Especially at B.C., right after the Newton hills, I found that the crowd was, for a mile or so, the only thing powerful enough to make me forget about the pain of running. Once the real pain kicked in for the last few miles though, there wasn't much I could do to overcome it.
3. it's all about the crowd. definitely write your name on your shirt or body. eat gu, drink gatorade, wear extra clothes until the last possible moment on the starting line. and focus on enjoying yourself!
4. I think working the crowd and taking the run out very slowly are the keys to this event. If you have energy left at the end, go for it!
5. Enjoy the crowds. They will carry you. If you smile, they will love you! Acknowledge them. I'm usually big on talking to myself, but there was so much going on that it was totally unnecessary.
6. I drank so much water and Gatorade in the 24 hours leading up to start time it was silly. I kind of wish I had been with somebody else in Hopkinton because I was just kind of meandering around for a couple of hours in the morning, trying to stay warm, going to the bathroom a lot. But once I started running it was all about the route and the crowd. Feed the crowd some love and they'll give it back to you ten-fold. I've never felt so in-the-zone.
7. My friends took my out to Bartley's to help cheer me up. In general, my strategy was to visualize the burger inside of my stomach.
8. I was smiling throughout the race. I thought it was very helpful in keeping me relaxed and preventing me from thinking too much about my pace or physical condition.
9. I tried to really get involved with the crowd. I gave high fives, said thanks for coming out, and had written my name on my jersey so got some great cheers for me which all kept me going. In fact, I didn't even feel like i was running for about the first 6 miles because i was so excited about all the people out. Other than that, I just ran with my mom (having a runner partner was an essential part of my finishing) the entire time, always helping each other along.
10. Honestly I didn't think of the marathon as anything more than just another run. Of course, by the end of the run I was very pleased to say that the marathon itself was anything but "just another run," but I think it helped my confidence to think, "I've run more than 20 miles at once before, so I'm just going to do that again"
11. Didn't run...
12. Definitely high-fived the crowd to give myself energy-boosts; took a twizzler from a kid, and it totally settled my stomach; got a lot of sleep the weekend before; focused on having a fun time rather than on a specific time goal
13. On Marathon Day, I ran with a friend I had trained with over the past few months, which was great! I don't think I could have finished without her. We started out slowly, which worked out really well. Later in the race (after mile 17 or so), we took 1-2 minute walk breaks every mile, which definitely helped us finish. High five-ing random lonely children and elderly people was also fun. In the last half the race, I also reminded myself to relax and loosen up. I also made sure to stop at every water stop and have some gatorade. This meant that even though I didn't have anything to eat while running (not even Gu at mile 17 since I hadn't tried it before), I still felt great the entire time! I suppose the amount of sugar in gatorade was enough.

**20. What else is on your mind about HCMC? Radical ideas, idiosyncrasies, etc., are all welcome – anything goes!**

1. Great job, [name redacted]. Thanks for all that you do, and thanks for this awesome opportunity!
2. I think I've said just about all that's on my mind. [Name redacted] does a wonderful job with the program, and I think that a somewhat stronger HCMC community would be great, but other than that, I can't think of much to change!
3. nada.
4. The after party is great...such good desserts!
5. Thank you for ALL of your work, [name redacted]!! Also, the massages were key. I was looking forward to them from the starting line!
6. All good things.
7. The HCMC-affiliated doctor at UHS was great, as were the general running health queries that went over the listserv. ALSO: HCMC gatorade-pong tournament.
8. N/A
9. I loved the messages at the post-race party. The care I received at UHS was helpful but not organized well because the different departments did not communicate well.
10. Everything was splendid. Thanks, [name redacted]!
11. Dr. [name redacted] was awesome!
12. Afterparty desserts were to die for! Plus, the guy giving the table massages gave me some valuable tips on taking care of my body after the marathon.
13. Thank you! This was a fantastic experience! I am so glad I chose to run the marathon with HCMC.