

Harvard College Marathon Challenge

Post-Event Survey Summary

2011

Questions/Complaints/Blame? E-Mail marathon@harvard.edu

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

OVERVIEW: HARVARD COLLEGE MARATHON CHALLENGE (HCMC)

Harvard College Marathon Challenge (HCMC) started in 2005. This year, ten HCMC participants raised money for the American Medical Athletic Association (AMAA), and three participants raised money for the Phillips Brooks House Association (PBHA). 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. In 2010-11, HCMC participants raised over \$22,500 to benefit AMAA and PBHA.

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 involvement, gender, previous running/marathon experience, and especially demonstrated prior commitment to the HCMC program. Each participant paid a nonrefundable registration fee. The three PBHA fundraisers joined HCMC quite late, in February 2011 (just ten weeks before the Marathon).

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 2011 Boston Marathon, HCMC participants were invited to complete an online survey that asked about their overall HCMC experiences. All thirteen HCMC participants (100%) 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).

2011 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?

2011 HCMC POST-MARATHON SURVEY – SURVEY QUESTIONS

15. HCMC has three stated purposes: (i) training for the Boston Marathon, (ii) fundraising for a worthy cause, 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., all are welcome here – anything goes!
21. I paid the HCMC Registration Fee and/or set up my personal fundraising page [**before; after**] January 1st of this year.
22. This was the [**1st; 2nd; 3rd; 4th 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. [**I won't be at Harvard next year (N/A); nope; doubtful; probably; definitely; I already do & will continue to volunteer with PBHA**]
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)?
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!

2011 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.

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

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

9. If I had to go back and decide again, I [**would=92%; would not=8%**] 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 = 8.38**
21. I paid the HCMC Registration Fee and/or set up my personal fundraising page [**before=77%; after=23%**] January 1st of this year.
22. This was the [**1st=92%, 2nd=8%; 3rd=0%; 4th or more=0%**] year in which I was an official HCMC participant.
23. I [**did=92%; did not=8%**] cross the Boston Marathon Finish Line this year. *[The respondent 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=84%; probably=8%; 50/50=8%; doubtful=0%; no way!=0%**]
25. If you were offered a slot in next year's Harvard College Marathon Challenge, would you accept it? [**ineligible=8%; definitely=61%; probably=8%; 50/50=8%; doubtful=15%; no way!=0%**]
26. Partly or wholly as a result of my HCMC participation, I will volunteer with PBHA. [**I won't be at Harvard next year (N/A)=15%; nope=15%; doubtful=15%; probably=24%; definitely=7%; I already do & will continue to volunteer with PBHA or Project HEALTH=24%**]
27. My current Harvard College affiliation is [**1-FR=freshman=15%; 2-SO=sophomore=15%; 3-JR=junior=55%; 4-SR=senior=0%; 5-PR=proctor=0%; 6-TU=resident tutor=15%; 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 knew I wanted to keep running in college, but didn't want the time commitment and stress that had accompanied track and cross country in high school. I ran a marathon at the end of senior year of high school, and thought it would be great to repeat the experience in college! I think my FOP leader was the first person to tell me about HCMC, so I got interested fairly early in the school year.
2. I saw HCMC as a fantastic opportunity to do something incredible. I didn't want to postpone my dreams until after I had graduated and started working.
3. I wanted to run the Boston Marathon and to do so with a cohesive group.
4. I've always planned on running the Boston Marathon during my time at Harvard and this year seemed like the best year to do it for me personally. I specifically got involved with HCMC because of conversations I had with [name redacted].
5. I wanted to try running the marathon.
6. I realized that running wasn't anywhere near as fun when you're doing it as an individual sport. I'd much rather go running with other people :)
7. I have always wanted to run the Boston Marathon. It's always been a goal and dream of mine and I thought this would be a really neat opportunity to fulfill that goal. I still want to time qualify but I've wanted to run a marathon for awhile and this just seemed like the perfect opportunity.
8. The desire to really get into running and the running community again.
9. I really wanted to run the Boston Marathon
10. It seemed like a really great way to meet other harvard runners and also have a lot of independence in a very low-pressure environment.
11. I've run consistently since the beginning of high school, so running a marathon has always been a goal of mine and many other runners. I don't have the discipline to train and develop my foot speed anymore without a team to support me, so my goals have changed from running a fast mile or 5k to running half marathons and marathons. Harvard doesn't have the greatest organized running community (not a fault of HCMC participants and organizers) but HCMC at least allows you to meet other runners with similar aspirations.
12. Running the marathon was a life goal of mine. I wanted to do it with a number but didn't have the time (or probably the ability) to qualify.
13. 1) Running with my students during my time as a tutor 2) Running the BAA Half Marathon in October '10 and having a great experience 3) Seeing the great work that PBHA does and really liking the idea of fundraising to support it

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

1. I was excited about the marathon for the entire year, and it was the best long-term goal to carry me through my first two semesters at Harvard. Though I had an injury early on, I was able to recover fast enough to complete training for the marathon.
2. So happy!! I never remember staying up late and writing papers. I will remember the adventures that I had this term forever. More than just memories, my friendships and grades really benefited.
3. In the beginning of HCMC, I only met with the rest of the group members a couple of times. Within a month and a half before race day, I started doing long runs with HCMC participants. It was very enjoyable and helpful to run with other HCMC-ers because it gave me the sense of working with a team.
4. In many ways, my experience was quite different from what I expected. I felt like I did a good job of establishing a base during the fall/early winter and I enjoyed participating in group runs. But during the spring semester, I found myself more than a little overcommitted. Instead of following a carefully planned training schedule, I instead got by with a training schedule made up on the fly. The actual race was incredible, definitely a highlight of my running experience. I now expect to complete many more marathons in the future. Without HCMC I probably wouldn't have that goal.
5. It was great!
6. The best part about it was the great community of runners. No one is competitive - everyone just wants to run with friends, not run to impress each other.
7. I enjoyed certain aspects of the HCMC experience. It didn't really feel like a team or like I was doing it through any sort of organization. It would have been nice if we did more things together as a group so we could get to know each other better. A group fundraiser or something would have been helpful. It's hard to post to the list because there are so many people on the list who aren't running the marathon. It would have been good support to meet with other members of the group more.
8. It was tough. When I finally realized I wasn't going to be able to give it my all, it was too late. I was initially really excited about participating though, but I ended up letting it stress me out and feel like another obligation instead of something fun.
9. It was great. I wish I could have been more healthy leading up to the marathon so I could have trained more but my HCMC experience was great!
10. Overall, I loved it. it really meant a lot to have both the noncompetitive atmosphere and a really supportive group of people.
11. HCMC has been great. I have met some of my best college friends by attending and running in HCMC events, and even when I don't post much, I keep an eye out for races people post. It's also allowed me to discover most of greater Boston area and do exciting runs I could have never found out about by myself.
12. Wonderful. All the runners were really supportive on training runs, on simple posts, and on race day seeing the yellow HCMC jerseys on the course were so uplifting.
13. Terrific! I enjoyed training with other Harvard runners and had a great time on race day and afterward

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

1. Running always improves my mood, and having such a great goal to consistently look forward to made me even happier. Long runs, complete with good music, friends, and food, were amazing. I ran very consistently, and had a very happy second semester!
2. I'm happy all the time now. HCMC is like crack. (kidding) But seriously- running will change your life. If you devote yourself to running, you will find that the things you do to run well will positively influence every other aspect of your life.
3. Participating in HCMC enhanced my general mood during training and especially on race day. It was helpful to meet with HCMC leading up to the race to discuss questions, no matter how minor (even chaffing). These meetings gave me a greater degree of confidence to run the race.
4. When I went on good group runs, that always brightened up my day. The long runs were especially relaxing/motivating.
5. It improved it.
6. It improved my mood greatly. Exercising every morning always keeps my mood better, even before I was in HCMC. But when I could do a nice run along the river with a friend in HCMC in the morning, and have a nice long chat, that was an even -better- start to my day!
7. I did meet some interesting people. There is kind of a lack of unity and personal connection. I felt really pressured to raise the money and like I had very little support. The group could use more direction. I felt like there was no one I could turn to for support or ask for questions. Often [name redacted] has very little concern for other runners, like waiting for runners who are on their way in long runs, etc.
8. It did not. Had I been more involved, it likely would have had a hugely positive impact.
9. No not really
10. Overall, I was happy but I am not sure that it was running or HCMC.
11. The goal of running the Boston Marathon really helped me feel upbeat throughout the whole year, and I really felt the support of my friends and family. I was injured for most of the school year, which made me feel down, but when I was up and running I felt more driven than usual.
12. I always felt better after a run. Always.
13. HCMC kept me sane through long hours in the lab and gave me something to be working toward and looking forward to through the ups and downs of my Ph.D. thesis project

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

1. My self-confidence increased a lot. Conquering each long run, and getting faster on my shorter runs, really made me appreciate and respect myself and my body more than I ever had.
2. I try to believe that I can do anything. I trained smart, and I finished. I expected that. It was the training that changed my life.
3. At Harvard there is a great deal of exertion of brain power. HCMC offered the chance to test my physical abilities. It was extremely rewarding to train and run the Boston Marathon. Running this race increased my feeling of self-worth.
4. My HCMC experience taught me (for the nth time) that I don't have to do something perfectly for it to be worthwhile. From fundraising to training to posting my runs, I didn't do as good a job as I had wanted to. But if I'm being fair with myself, it was already kind of crazy that I was trying to fit in a marathon this semester. And so as I relaxed into a less serious routine of getting my training done on a day-to-day basis, I found myself getting less anxious about falling short of my expectations.
5. I'm not sure it did.
6. My self-perception improved greatly! I didn't think I could ever run a marathon - but there are a lot of other people in HCMC who also had never done long distance running until this year, which encouraged me to keep training.
7. It was a really neat opportunity and it changed my perspective on running.
8. It did not, but again, it likely would have had I been able to put more time into it.
9. I was more confident I was doing the right thing, which was to not push for a time on marathon day. If I would have trained for myself, I most likely would have destroyed my day with a time goal.
10. I felt very confident in my abilities.
11. I feel like I have changed as a runner. I used to judge my ability on speed alone, e.g. what is my mile pace or what time can I run on a 5k right now. I've realized that people think that I am an awesome runner no matter what speed I run, so now I focus more on running as an experience rather than always comparing my times to other people. I feel most Harvard students think that they are too busy to run, and friends have suggested other colleges have good running organizations because the course load isn't as difficult as Harvard. Running for them is a bragging right or something they do for a year so they can run a big event and then quit. I have found that by maintaining a consistent running routine throughout college and not thinking about running as a chore, these people are really messed up.
12. I just ran a marathon--I can do anything.
13. After my first half marathon, I was pretty confident that I could finish a full marathon, but if not for HCMC I wouldn't have done it so soon, and it wouldn't have been Boston, and it wouldn't have been with such a great group of other runners.

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

1. I'm just a person who tends to procrastinate a lot. Running helped me de-stress from the results of my procrastination, but I do not think my time management improved a lot.
2. I might not manage my time any better, but I prioritize running. And sleeping and eating. Even though I don't always turn in every p-set or paper on time, my grades have improved. I'm smarter and faster because I sleep at night and learn during class.
3. HCMC did not effect my daily organizational skills. However, it was beneficial to do the long Saturday runs with an HCMC runner because our mutual sense of purpose, to run the marathon, motivated us to run faster.
4. I wish I had been better at planning/scheduling my training. It was pretty haphazard. I can't really say that it improved or affected in any significant way my time management or organizational skills. It was just more of the same haphazard schedule that I normally have.
5. I'm not sure it did.
6. My time management improved a lot, since having to wake up around 6 am every morning to get in my training before class meant that I really needed to finish my work efficiently to get to bed in time.
7. I kind of felt like it was very difficult, I knew I could handle spending the time actually running but the recovery time and the amount of time it takes you to recover from your long runs took a lot longer than expected.
8. Heh.
9. Yea, I think I already have quite a lot of this but maybe it helped even more
10. I was very organized this semester. #WINNING
11. I still procrastinate a lot and am a general slob, but doing long runs and races at least forces me to plan my weekend ahead of time.
12. It made me add structure to my days to make sure I got in my runs. This normally meant forcing myself to get up in the morning for a run, something I never regretted once I was up and running.
13. no change

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. My grades were better because I was sleeping more and had more time to reflect and sort out my emotions on long runs. I was overall a much more stable person, and this definitely was reflected in my academic work. I was more motivated and also had more alone time (on runs) to contemplate ideas I was learning about. I did end up skipping some morning lectures to make sure I slept enough, but was always able to catch up and get notes from friends, and was still successful in my classes.
2. My grades are up. My relationships have improved. I feel fantastic. What else is there at this point?
3. HCMC as a group did not effect my academic performance, but the timing of the marathon event and the following fatigue (for the rest of the week) detracted from my study time. I found myself having trouble concentrating due to fatigue.
4. I don't think it did.
5. I did very well this semester.
6. Running every morning focuses my mind for the rest of the day. The few days I didn't run or do strength training (maybe only 2 days over the course of the 18 week schedule) were the days that I found it harder to focus on studying.
7. It kind of negatively affected my performance, it took such a toll on my body and took so much energy I didn't have the same energy to devote to my schoolwork
8. Uncertain.
9. none
10. ~same
11. It didn't affect me too much because running is generally a regular routine for me. It was hard to get work done after a long run though, so I had to plan around them.
12. Exercise in general keeps me focused, if it wasn't for HCMC I would have been doing something else active.
13. I'm sure the long training runs made it easier to focus in lab.

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

1. Training for the marathon made me so much more aware of my health, and I honestly didn't want to put my body through weekends with long nights of dancing and drinking. I completely stopped drinking for the six weeks leading up to the marathon, and didn't go out on nights before long runs. And I was fine! I was so happy with this! I realized how little I needed the Harvard party scene, and spent more quality time with friends on weekend nights.
2. Running the marathon is a great excuse to pass when that annoying blockmate of yours invites you to her lame party. I didn't skip anything that I really wanted to attend.
3. The HCMC experience did not affect my drinking and partying habits.
4. None. I hardly ever drink and that continued during my training.
5. I'm not sure it did
6. I partied and drank rarely before (maybe twice a year), but doing HCMC reduced that to 0 - since every Saturday I had to get up early for my long run, and every Sunday I had to get up early for strength training, so I couldn't party or drink the nights before.
7. It inhibited me from spending as much time with my friends and partying. I don't usually drink anyways so this didn't really affect my alcohol consumption but it did keep me from relaxing when I went out with my friends because I was always thinking about my running and sleeping.
8. It did not.
9. I did drink less
10. I pretty much didn't drink or party at all this year. I very much limited my alcohol intake to roughly ~3 times this semester, mostly because I was running a long run every Sunday and I was pretty exhausted on Fridays.
11. None
12. I hardly drink or party, but did have a drink or two the two weekends before the race.
13. I drank somewhat less and slept somewhat more, particularly in the last month before the marathon

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. I still procrastinated a lot, but my other habits changed in a big way - I made sleep and health a gigantic priority. At the first sign of illness, I took vitamins and slept a lot. Needing to stay healthy forced me to sleep more, which helped my academic performance a lot - even though I sometimes skipped out on work or class to sleep. I (possibly?) ate healthier, or I was at least more aware of the food I was eating. In general, I was just a happier, less stressed person, and this had a positive effect on my friendships, new and old.
2. Priority list: sleep, relationships, running, eating, school. Grades? Never been better. Being well rested is way more important than doing work.
3. Training for the marathon changed my eating habits and daily routine. I ate more and prioritized running, sometimes over other activities and homework. HCMC enhanced my social relationships with other runners. At first I was hesitant to run with others, but after taking a few long runs with others, it became a routine I looked forward too.
4. It mostly affected me through indirect pathways. The training made me fitter and probably helped me focus better.
5. I'm not sure it did
6. It helped me sleep better, and helped me to focus my thinking for the rest of the day. I also got a lot of time to think and meditate during my runs, which helped me deepen my spiritual walk with God.
7. I paid more attention to my sleep and drinking water. It made me more sluggish on recovery days because my body was so sore
8. I got to run a few times with some people who hadn't in a while, so I felt good about being able to spend time with them and get them back into running, at least for a short time.
9. I did eat better
10. Marathon training was pretty intense for eating/sleeping/routine. I made training a large part of my routine so that factored in nicely. but the change in eating was a bit tough to manage at times (I should have done better with that, in retrospect, as I don't think I got enough calories to match my long runs) and I have a pretty rotten sleeping schedule to begin with. overall though, I knew that these were things I had to consider more in order to perform well. definitely things I have learned for next time around.
11. Probably ate and slept more than usual this year. I actually socialize more when I run a lot.
12. Slept great every night I ran. Runs gave me time to relax and think about whatever. You can also eat whatever you want whenever you want.
13. I spent a lot more time talking about running with my friends (both runners and non-runners!)

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

1. The actual marathon, of course! It was the best crowd, perfect weather and I just felt great the entire way. My training partner and I became really good friends and ended up having a lot in common besides a love of running, which was another highlight of HCMC.
2. My favorite parts were the adventure runs that I went on. Exploring Boston and Cambridge is a blast.
3. The best part of my HCMC experience was having friends to run with during the race. It was amazing to hear my HCMC friend yell "[name redacted]" a few miles before Heart Brake Hill! This friend and I had trained on these hills together and as a result helped each other run a difficult part of the course during the race.
4. The marathon itself! It's hard to describe how awesome it is. The crowds are amazing and the feeling of pushing yourself to your limit is amazing.
5. The marathon! Having so many people support me was wonderful.
6. The best part of my HCMC experience was the community on marathon day. I ran with a number of other HCMC people along the way. My friends also waited along the sidelines and jumped in and ran with me for a few miles to help me along.
7. I loved running the actual marathon. The marathon was amazing.
8. Knowing that the money I raised was going to be used to encourage more people to get into running.
9. The support from [names redacted], as well as all the runners but especially the leadership was great!
10. Seeing runners in the athlete's village beforehand and talking about how excited we were.
11. Number 1: Knowing that my friends were coming out to cheer me on at mile 25 for the first time in college. It really forced me to overcome the pain and finish the race even though I knew my time would be abysmal. Number 2: Kissing a Wellesley girl!
12. Race day. Seeing so many HCMCers and talking to all of them on the course as we were passing each other.
13. The whole thing was terrific, no one standout

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

1. I got a stress fracture in December and had to take off six weeks from running. Mentally, this was awful. I spent a ton of time getting stressed out that I might not be able to run the marathon, and I had to do a lot of cross training in the gym. However, I ended up healing and being able to run the marathon just fine. I also came to like gyms, which came in handy because I still had to do cross-training after my injury, and was only able to run outside 2 or 3 times a week. None of this was HCMC's fault, so I don't know how this could be improved at all.
2. Wear sun screen! I got the worst sun burn of my life during the marathon. Didn't notice until a few hours later.
3. I would suggest to future HCMC runners to go on group runs from start to finish, particularly for the longer weekend training runs. Running with another person often increases your pace and makes the time past faster while talking.
4. The fundraising was harder than I thought it would be but that was entirely my fault. I didn't feel comfortable asking acquaintances for money, so I restricted my requests to family members and close friends. That was dumb. I expected more people would give in higher amounts. That didn't happen and I had to fork over some of my own money as a result. Luckily I had the financial resources to do this. But if you don't, this could be a big problem.
5. I got injured :(
6. The fundraising goals are overwhelming. The idea that I have to self-pay anything I don't raise has made it feel less like raising money for a charity and a good cause, and more like a frantic race to stay out of extreme debt.
7. The lack of guidance. I felt like I had received my spot and I was left to my own devices. I didn't really feel the support of a running community. I had to raise all of this money and there was no one to offer any advice or guidance. I also had a lot of questions about training, it would have been nice if we got together as a marathon group and talked about some of the training issues, etc.
8. Fundraising was damn stressful.
9. Fundraising, I just do not like to ask people for money. I think 1500 was a minimum amount so not sure if that could improve.
10. none.
11. Getting cramps mid-marathon for the second time in two attempts. I felt really depressed for a while because I was so sure I was going to run a great time like 2:55 because I had prepared very well for the race, paced myself, and felt great in general. I realized that my friends and family would still think I was amazing even if I ran the race in 4:00, so by the end of the race I didn't have any sense of disappointment. Also, this winter was brutal, and I got a series of ridiculous injuries that affected my conditioning.
12. Winter training. I hate the cold, I really got sick of waking up and seeing how miserable the weather was. It led me to work out inside quite a bit.
13. Nothing stands out as bad

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

1. I would have scaled back my intense running first semester, which led to my stress fracture. I increased my weekly mileage really rapidly from what I was used to in high school. I wish I'd gone slower, not gotten overexcited about barefoot running, and been able to prevent my stress fracture.
2. I would have worn sun screen and had less to drink during the marathon.
3. In retrospect, I would have organized more group runs and a few more social events pre-race to get to know the other HCMC runners better.
4. I really regret not posting more of my runs. It was hard though because I rarely knew when exactly I would be free to go run. When I did join other runs, I always had a great experience.
5. I should have trained more
6. dunno...
7. Post more runs in advance, I posted a lot of runs the day of and no one really responded
8. Taken on fewer spring semester obligations.
9. Started fundraising earlier.
10. more group meetings.
11. Run more local running events, do more adventure runs
12. Tried to get more runs in with HCMCers before the race. I ran with people on the list but necessarily those running the marathon. That personal connection along the course would have made it even better.
13. It would have been good to mix up my training partners slightly more to meet some more runners

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

1. Caution runners about rapid mileage increase? It would also have been nice to have a few more official get togethers, maybe before or after the long Tufts runs.
2. Help us organize Berryline events. We are way too scatterbrained to do this ourselves. I had fun at HOTM- keep it up!
3. HCMC could have a once every other week meeting to speak about training or to go on long runs together. HCMC could start compiling a document of tips to hand off to future marathon runners.
4. Have a smaller registration fee. The \$600 upfront was a real burden and I know of a number of people who couldn't participate because that fee would have come directly out of their own pockets.
5. It would be nice to lower the cost.
6. not sure...
7. Organize more runs and ways of transporting runners similar to the Tufts program. Building a stronger community through joint fund raising events and organized runs/activities.
8. HCMC is great. Maybe periodic check-ins to see how everyone's doing.
9. I do think over 1500 dollars is a lot to raise for a student. I did feel bad for the students raised much more.
10. nothing.
11. I think Harvard On the Move is a great development and would love to see it become a big part of campus life. I think there could be more organized efforts to go to races like Hyannis and Brian Honan. I've also gotten a sense that fewer and fewer competitive runners are using the list for some reason, but I don't know if this is a trend or a coincidence.
12. While not an issue for me, helping with fundraising might be helpful. Giving ideas, setting goals, strategies. Basically fundraising goals should be tied to training goals.
13. Get larger! If HCMC were twice as large, there would be more opportunities for group runs, and more opportunities for finding different training partners with similar paces

15. HCMC has three stated purposes: (i) training for the Boston Marathon, (ii) fundraising for a worthy cause, 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. The fundraising wasn't nearly as hard as I expected it to be - people were very generous, and I actually ended up being able to raise more than my minimum. The running community in general seems to have made great strides this year with all the "Harvard on the Move" events, though I sometimes wished the actual marathon club had more of a community aspect.
2. Check, check, check. Well done.
3. Fundraising, especially for the American Medical Athletic Association, was a rewarding experience. It gave me the sense that I had earned a running spot and that I was running FOR someone else in addition to myself.
4. I definitely feel more connected to the running community. I personally didn't much care about AMAA, the organization for which we raised money. I wish we could have raised money for PBHA.
5. It was great!
6. I have made so many friends through HCMC. Going on a long run with someone you've never met will make you the best of friends by the end of it.
7. I felt like HCMC could work on building a stronger community. HCMC could also really benefit from improved communication.
8. I felt like all those things were accomplished by participants.
9. I think it did all three!
10. HCMC does all of this and more. I am so grateful to have been a part of this wonderful community.
11. I think I've explained i and iii. As for fundraising, it would be great if we could get more slots through PBHA, but I understand the bureaucratic issues. Maybe organize some fundraising events for the Harvard community, and the Harvard half marathon in the future seems like something to look forward to.
12. More emphasis should be placed on fundraising. It shouldn't be a vehicle for running the marathon.
13. Great success for all three

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. Though I wasn't always posting two runs a week when I was injured, I still posted some cross-training - I felt quite comfortable posting on the listserv. Having to post two workouts a week kept me accountable for my own running, and I met a lot of interesting people by going on runs they'd posted!
2. The requirement is great. I think posting creeps out hot girls but for everyone else, it is a very good thing. I met tons of people this way. One thing I would improve would be the timing. I felt like everyone posted on the weekend, but never during the week. It would have been better if the runs were spread out so I could have met more people.
3. Posting on the listserv was helpful to meet new running partners. Personally, I made a handful of friends who I not only enjoyed running with but who helped me to train harder for the race.
4. I had a hard time interacting with the listserv for two reasons. First, I rarely know the exact times when I'll be available for my run, which makes coordinating with other difficult. Second, I found it hard to sift through the many messages I was getting each day. I wish I could only get messages that were relevant to my normal training pace.
5. I wish more people would come on my runs
6. The listserv was useful to me, since I love going on my training runs with other people. But near the end, I might have lapsed on posting 2 runs/week since people stopped responding to my requests to go on runs between 6 and 7:15 am as it was too early for them.
7. It was frustrating when people didn't respond to posts. I did meet some really cool people through the listserv. The listserv seems like the only aspect of HCMC. There is no real group unity, all questions are redirected to the listserv
8. I like the listserv a lot. I think it's awesome.
9. I do think post 2 runs/week is fully reasonable but I also do appreciate the fact that no one tells you off if you do get sick and can not run/post.
10. I think its a good idea, but for the most part, I like to run alone and I do get a bit anxious if I make plans in advance to run then something comes up. I always was able to make runs with people, and always loved chatting with new friends. it was very much an impetus to run, especially on cold days. but sometimes posting runs too far in advance (or too short) made me anxious in case alternate plans arose.
11. People were more quiet this year for some reason. In the past when I posted my usual 7mm pace run at least one person would want to join. This year, 50% of the time no one responded, so I was a little discouraged. Hopefully this isn't a trend.
12. I started posting less and less on the listserv simply because I found there were a few people I didn't like running with that always came on my runs and a few people I did like. Those few I did like would just email each other to coordinate our runs. This only happened on the very long runs at the end. I loved running with just about everyone on my short runs.
13. I found it really hard to post 2 runs a week. I only ever ran 3 times a week, and I found it hard to balance HCMC posted runs with running/catchup sessions with friends and running alone (which I like to do sometimes). The other problem is that my schedule is such that I often couldn't plan runs much ahead of time I'd go right after I got up in the morning (but wouldn't know until bedtime when that was going to be). Or I would plan to go in the afternoon, but only when I reached a good break point in my lab work. So I couldn't really post these runs because they didn't have a definite start time, and I didn't feel good about saying "who wants to come with me in 15 minutes??" (though maybe I should have done that anyway). Also, I didn't really see anyone else posting twice a week. And if everyone were posting their own runs, then few people would be free to join each others runs -- everyone would be leading a run with no followers. I think if all HCMC participants actually posted at least one run a week, every week, that would lead to more runs being posted than everyone being expected to post twice a week but not actually doing it.

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 literally got a fruit shake every week. Everyone should do this! Also, having yogurt or any milk products in general is a great recovery food for right after a run, so I would always get my shakes after my long run of the week.
2. b.good for life!!!
3. b.good shakes were well appreciated!
4. I didn't use them.
5. Hooray for b.good
6. It's awesome that so many businesses supported us!
7. The fruit shakes at b. good were a good motivation and useful for getting quick energy after runs especially on runs when I didn't carry money. I wasn't aware there was a New Balance discount.
8. I did not take advantage of them.
9. b.good was great!
10. LOVE THE FREE SHAKES!!!! also awesome 15% discount at Marathon Sports.
11. The shakes were awesome and something that kept me motivated to finish long runs.
12. Loved the b. good discount. Wish I had used it more. Didn't use anything else...
13. The Marathon Sports discount card was nice. Didn't really use the others

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

1. Training for Boston is very time-consuming, but was the highlight of my freshman year. I made a great new friend and had a gigantic goal to work towards all year. Your friends and acquaintances will think you're really badass for getting up early on a winter morning to go on a long run. By the time you're throwing out sentences like "going on an easy 13-miler," you get some serious respect! ALSO, and this is advice for every runner in the world: change your stride rate to 180 strides per minute. After my stress fracture, my faculty advisor suggested I do this, and it completely altered my running. I bought a \$12 running metronome from Amazon and wore it for around a month on my runs - and by the end of that time, my stride changed! A faster stride turnover means you will mid-foot strike and spend more time airborne, so you just have a lot less stress on your body. And go on the Tufts runs!
2. Do this and make it your top priority.
3. Start running with other people from the very start of training. Make sure to do a good long run on the marathon course, preferably a 20-22 mile run in which you hit Heart Brake Hill at a mile 18 or 19. Check out the end of the course before the race. It is unexpectedly hilly!!!
4. Do it! But get fundraising out of the way early. You can't be afraid to ask people.
5. It's so worth it!
6. Do it if you want to keep motivated to train for the marathon! It's so hard to train for without a super supportive community!
7. Make sure you're sure of your decision. Fund-raising is very difficult, make sure you have lots of ideas and are prepared. It's an incredibly large time commitment and requires a lifestyle change, make sure this is something you actually want to commit to during your limited college career.
8. Make sure you have time for this. It can be extremely rewarding if you're willing and able to put in the work.
9. It is totally fine to post spontaneous runs that starts within the hour. Just as many people show up to them as if you were posting them hours in advance.
10. Enjoy it. The marathon is such an inspiring experience. For many of us, this will be our only marathon, or our only Boston. Enjoy every minute of it. We are really lucky.
11. You're wasting your time in Boston if you don't run/experience the marathon.
12. At the end of the day, don't worry about your time. It's great if you were on pace, but if you fell off, completing a MARATHON is the real victory.
13. Make a training plan, stick to it, and you'll be totally fine on race day.

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 ran with my friend for almost the entire race. I brought my ipod, which I didn't keep on the whole time, but when I needed it, I had it. I high-fived lots of little kids, hollered back at the crowd when they yelled "Go Harvard!" and ate lots of electrolyte/carb running food during the race. I wrote my name on my arms. I also wore my race outfit on a medium-distance run a week before the marathon to make sure it would be comfortable. And this will sound super weird but on marathon day, there's a big possibility that you might have to go to the bathroom in public. Don't be too self-conscious to duck behind a tree! Waiting in line is annoying and will slow you down. I went to the bathroom behind a car, and it was pretty liberating!
2. I got like 10,000 high fives, ran with my friends, and had a great time. Running slowly? Worth it!
3. (1) Eat Gu along the course. Train with Gu on long training runs. (2) Be careful about expending too much energy weaving through the starting line of the race! If you want to cut down your time, you can cut down the number of high fives and zig zags you do. (3) You do not need to carry water on you during the race. There is plenty of water and Gatorade on the course. (4) Heart Brake Hill is not that bad, but the hills at the end of the course between miles 23 and 26 are painful. (5) Try to start out at a reasonably quick pace as to pass the slower runners. Do not get caught behind people that are slower than you.
4. I treated race day like any other training run. The only difference was that I made sure had gotten enough sleep ahead of time. I also ate tons of pizza in the 48 hour window before the race. During my run, I fell into my groove and stayed there. I consistently ran the same mile splits until mile 22 when my legs gave out and my pace slowed significantly. I would have liked to have run negative splits instead. But I was able to go strong for so long because I just allowed myself to soak up my environment and not worry about any details. One more thing - I didn't use any on-the-go food during the race or any of my training runs. It seems like you don't need it if you train yourself not to need it.
5. I tried to get rid of any semblance of time goals.
6. When I felt weak, I went over these two Bible verses very slowly in my head, focusing on each word: "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking onto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." and "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up on wings as eagles. They shall RUN and NOT BE WEARY, they shall walk and NOT FAINT." I also sang the hymn version of the latter verse (Isaiah 40:31). I also keep high fiving people when I felt weak, and I kissed many of the Wellesley girls who had the "kiss me!" signs - which gave me a lot of energy. When people cheered me on (I had my name written on my arm, so they could call out my name!), I cheered back, which would get them all cheering me!! I also asked my friends and family to track me online, which updated my position every 5K. So I took the race 5K at a time. When I got tired, I told myself I just had to get to the next 5K mark so that everyone would see that I got there. And I asked some friends to meet me at 16.8 miles, 19 miles, and 21 miles. That kept me running during the hardest part of the marathon. Just before 21 miles, my boyfriend was there, and he held my hand and ran with me the final 5.5 miles. He supported me when something in my knee tore, and I had to limp the last four miles - but at least I still semi-jogged it with his inspiration!
7. Working the crowd was so helpful. I got so much energy and such a boost from high fiving people and interacting with the crowd. I used negative splits which was amazing and helped me run a healthy race.
8. n/a
9. I mentally prepared with the map in my hand the night before. I told myself I would feel really good at mile 22 and I did. During the raise, I started so so slow but kept that pace. I high five all kids along the way that I could see. I really enjoyed the crowd. When things got hard, I thought about all the people that have given me money through fundraise and that kept me going.
10. First 13 miles I went out pretty fast and was satisfied. Wellesley "scream tunnel" was wonderful. High-five anyone. I was surprised at how much of a boost that really was (even though everyone told me it would be). After mile 21 my legs started to hurt and my right calf was seizing. I was really lucky that my amazing mom and some great friends met me and really pushed the last 5 miles in. Knowing that they would be there was a really great motivator for me.
11. Most important: relieve your bowels Other important things: drink a cup of tea, savor the crowds, eat pasta, think about downtown Boston
12. My goal for the marathon was 500 high-fives. I had 340 through half-way. I ended up finishing with 560, 75 of which came in the last two miles. Those last 75 got me to the finish. The ones before that led to my cramps though. Do NOT run on one side of the road the whole time. Either run in the middle or keep switching sides. The slant adds up after 22 miles.
13. During the last several miles, I just stayed focused on getting to the next mile marker without stopping no matter how tempting it seemed. I had a friend surprise me by jumping in right around mile 24 and running with me up to Mass Ave -- totally kept me going.

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

1. The afterparty was awesome! The massages helped my calves a lot, which were a bit tight after the race.
2. I wish we had a bandit running team. Raising money can be a turn off.
3. One idea would be to have HCMC join with the other Boston Marathon runners at Harvard to do an event the Thursday or Friday before the race to raise awareness and recruit spectators. Hand out sheets of paper to people with the directions on how to get to the race (already provided online). Similar events could also be done in a few months advance to the race in order to help charity runners fundraise.
4. The afterparty was really nice! Really good food!
5. The massages were great
6. The massages at the afterparty (and the desserts!) are so great!
7. The after party was fun, it would have been nice to have longer massages.
8. n/a
9. The desserts and massages were great! It was also super nice to talk with everyone afterwards.
10. So grateful! HCMC is great. Also, go on Tufts run. If nothing else, the ones where they do part of the marathon course. Really helpful, especially because I knew exactly what to expect. No surprises. Well, except for the PERFECT weather.
11. I think people need to be aware that HCMC isn't just for people wanting to find a workout buddy like a pseudo-Craigslist. It could really be used for so much more. Not a criticism, but just an observation.
12. Massages were great.
13. Loved the afterparty -- really grateful for the massages, tasty treats, and good company