

## Planning committee seeks feedback on Bass Library renovation proposal



January 14, 2019

Faculty, students and staff are invited to a presentation on the upcoming renovation of the Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Library on Wednesday, Jan. 23, from 3:30 to 5 p.m., in the Sterling Memorial Library Lecture Hall. Project architects will show designs for the space, and librarians will share a proposal for the content, organization and management of the library's post-renovation collection.

"The proposed design and collections have been based on extensive research into the habits and preferences of Bass library users," said Assessment Librarian Sarah Tudesco, chair of the planning committee. "As we approach key decision points, we are excited to share our plans with faculty, students and staff for any additional comments and questions."

The goal of the project is to expand study space in Bass, a popular destination for Yale College students. Since two new colleges opened in August 2017, the number of undergraduates at Yale has grown, for a total increase of 800 students by fall 2019.

On Jan. 23, Providence-based DBVW Architects will show a proposed design that will increase the library's current 365 seats by at least 20 percent and reconfigure the layout to include more individual study spaces. Shelving will be reduced to make room for seating and to let natural light from the courtyards reach more of the upper level.

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The Bass collection currently holds about 150,000 items, including scholarly works related to the undergraduate curriculum, English-language literature, graphic novels, DVDs and audiobooks. The renovation will reduce the collection to about 40 percent of its current size. DVDs and audiobooks—formats with declining use—will be integrated into university library collections as appropriate. Books removed from Bass will be integrated into the collection held in Sterling Memorial Library's stack tower.

Going forward, the collection in Bass will be developed, arranged and presented with the goal of encouraging students to explore and engage with the materials. The upper level will showcase specialized collections, such as graphic novels, and themed displays of books related to a current topic or issue. Faculty, students, and librarians will be invited to develop sub-collections related to a specific course, subject area or intellectual concept, with related events and programming. The lower level will house a dynamic, high-use collection of newer books.

"A library collection is essentially a conversation between the library and its users," Tudesco said. "We are excited about the opportunities to partner with faculty and students to make the Bass collection more dynamic and interactive."

Last year, before design work began, the library [commissioned a study](#) [1] of how the campus community uses and perceives Bass. The study revealed that students choose Bass primarily to work on class assignments rather than to access the collection. While valuing the communal study experience at Bass, students showed a strong preference for carrels and other individual study spaces that limit visual distraction. Faculty responses to the study, on the other hand, focused on the prospect of changing the collection, expressing concern that students would have fewer opportunities to make serendipitous discoveries while browsing in the stacks.

"We have worked hard to address the interests and issues raised by the research," Tudesco said. "We are eager to present the proposals to the campus community on Jan. 23 and receive as much feedback as possible."

Construction is scheduled to begin after Commencement with a goal of finishing by year end. Planning is now under way for the temporary relocation of course reserves, equipment borrowing, scan-and-deliver and other Bass services during construction. Ongoing project updates will be posted at [guides.library.yale.edu/bass2019](https://guides.library.yale.edu/bass2019) [2]. Questions about the Jan. 23 meeting may be addressed to [sarah.tudesco@yale.edu](mailto:sarah.tudesco@yale.edu) [3].

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### Links

[1] <https://web.library.yale.edu/news/2018/08/bass-library-renovation-planned-0> [2]  
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