

Smaller, more vibrant collection planned for renovated Bass Library



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Plans for the Bass Library renovation—and for the library’s collection after the renovation—are being refined following a Jan. 23 community forum. At the forum, DVBW Architects presented for discussion a design that would increase the library’s seating capacity from 365 to 470, while reducing the collection shelved in Bass from 150,000 to approximately 40,000 volumes. Older, little used titles from the current Bass collection, as well as thousands of duplicate titles, would be moved to the Sterling Memorial Library stacks.

One student and several faculty at the forum voiced concerns that downsizing the collection in Bass would limit students’ opportunities to browse and engage with books.

“We have heard those concerns and are working hard to address them along with the primary objective of the project, which is to create more study space for the growing undergraduate population,” said Susan Gibbons, the Stephen F. Gates ’68 University Librarian and Deputy Provost for Collections and Scholarly Communication. “The collection will be smaller post-renovation, but it will also be stronger and more vibrant—and much more relevant to the classes Yale College students are taking right now.”

A list of Frequently Asked Questions and ongoing project updates can be found at <https://guides.library.yale.edu/bass2019> [1].

The post-renovation collection will have a renewed focus on books by Yale faculty, critically acclaimed books, and works related to the undergraduate curriculum or recommended by faculty. Students will still be able to browse the books removed from Bass in the Sterling Memorial Library collection, which has been recently re-ordered to be more accessible and easier to browse.

The architects are now working to modify their plan to add shelving for 10,000 more books—for a post-renovation collection of approximately 50,000 volumes—with a seating configuration that will still substantially increase study space. The library has also set up a process to take faculty recommendations on the post-renovation collection’s

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parameters as well as specific titles faculty would like included.

“More than 70 percent of the current Bass Collection was added before 2003, and no one has taken out many of these books for years,” Gibbons said. “This project has prompted us to look more closely at the composition, age, and use of the collection. Going forward, we are committed to maintaining a more dynamic, up-to-date collection that evolves with the addition of new courses and encourages students’ engagement with books.”

Some 40,000 titles in the current collection have more than one copy. For low-use titles, the duplicates will be among the volumes moved to the Sterling stacks.

Post-renovation, books on the upper level of Bass will be displayed in small, themed collections selected and presented with faculty and student input. Most of the shelving for casual browsing will be on the library’s lower level.

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.

Source URL: <https://web.library.yale.edu/news/2019/02/smaller-more-vibrant-collection-planned-renovated-bass-library?page=2>

Links

[1] <https://guides.library.yale.edu/bass2019>