

Bass Library closed through February due to flood damage



February 9, 2021

Bass Library will reopen on March 1 after a broken pipe flooded the two-level library on Jan. 29, requiring a month of cleaning and repairs.

Until March 1, students can find alternate [places to study](#) [1] in Sterling Library, Haas Arts Library, Marx Science and Social Science Library, the Divinity Library, and the Medical Library. Books from the Bass collection can be requested for pickup at any of those locations, or for delivery to home or campus residence.

The flood was precipitated just after closing on a frigid Friday evening when a frozen sprinkler line in the upper-level ceiling burst. Water poured down and flowed in all directions before the leak was discovered by a custodian and the water could be turned off. The water filled the conduits that carry electrical and internet cables beneath the floor and leaked from there to the lower level, said John Clegg, director of Building Operations and Security. More water cascaded down the stairs.

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A disaster recovery company was called in the same evening to pump out water and begin drying out the space. Massive heaters, fans, and dehumidifiers had to run for several days, leaching moisture out of the air, before the damage could be fully assessed. Now, contractors are replacing sections of ruined wallboard, ceiling, and wood paneling; shampooing carpets; and cleaning stonework.

The impact on the library's 65,000-volume collection was fortunately minimal. About 730 books were shipped off-site for drying and further evaluation. No rare or difficult-to-replace items were affected.

Originally opened in 1971 as Cross Campus Library, the underground library was reimagined as the Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Library in 2007. Decorative elements, including the entry pavilions on Cross Campus and the tile frieze at the end of the tunnel from Sterling Library, were designed to visually connect the renovated space with Sterling Library's Gothic motifs. In 2019, Bass was again renovated to expand study space and increase the flow of natural light from the building's sunken courtyards. At that time, the collection was substantially renewed and consolidated on the lower level.

Photo: Barbara Rockenbach

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Links

[1] <https://web.library.yale.edu/places/to-study>