February 5, 2019
Dear Students,

In response to the recent Yale Daily News articles, I want to share an update on the Bass Library renovation project.

Last year, we conducted in-depth research on how students use Bass Library, followed by several open meetings and design charrettes that some students attended. This research and outreach have shaped our planning process, and we continue to welcome your comments and questions.

In 2017, as we started planning, we hoped that construction could be achieved over one summer, but, as the project took shape, we learned it would take longer. We are now scheduled to start work after Commencement and finish by the end of the fall semester. We are currently developing our plans for temporary relocation of Bass services and will share those with you in a few weeks.

Below is a project update that I hope will answer many of your questions. More details, including the research report and preliminary designs, can be found on the project website. Please note that the posted designs [dated Jan. 23]* are no longer accurate in their estimates of collection size. We have since directed the architects to explore how to accommodate a somewhat larger collection together with more study space.

If you have questions or would like to comment on any aspect of the project, please use our project feedback form, or write to me directly at susan.gibbons@yale.edu.

With best wishes,

Susan

Susan Gibbons
Stephen F. Gates ’68 University Librarian
Deputy Provost for Collections & Scholarly Communication
Bass Library Renovation
Project Update 2/4/19

• The renovation of Bass Library grew out of the addition of the two new colleges. It is a response to the growing student body, which has led to overcrowding in Bass at key times during the semester. The primary goal is to increase study space for students.

• Construction will begin after Commencement 2019 and should be completed by the end of the fall semester. If we can finish and reopen sooner, we will—but until the project design is finished and a construction team assigned, we will be conservative in our timeline estimates.

• We are currently planning the temporary relocation of Bass services to Sterling Memorial Library during the fall semester, including consideration of extended opening hours in Sterling. We will share the plan with students for comments before it is finalized.

• As part of the renovation, the collection in Bass will be re-evaluated and reduced. The most recent design anticipates 50,000 volumes post-renovation, but the final number may be higher. The architects are looking for ways to increase shelving while still expanding study space.

• The current Bass collection holds 150,000 items but 40,000 are duplicate copies of other books in the Bass collection. About 70 percent of the books were acquired pre-2003 and [many]* haven’t been checked out in years. The renovation is an opportunity to work with faculty to update and renew an outdated collection.

• 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. The collection will be smaller but also more vital and relevant.

• All books removed from the Bass collection will be re-shelved in Sterling Memorial Library, fully available and accessible to students.

• The renovation will concentrate the collection on the lower level, to facilitate continuous browsing. We will also relocate the offices of two librarians to the upper level, where they will be more accessible to students.

• The upper level will have more seating and, with less shelving, more natural light throughout the space. It will feature changing displays of books on a particular theme or research area, selected with faculty and student partners to increase student engagement.

• As librarians, we understand the pleasure and educational value of browsing through a print book collection. We hope—with faculty input—to create a post-renovation collection in Bass that will foster students’ exploration of library resources and be a more effective gateway to the more than 12 million books and other items in our library collections.

• We continue to welcome faculty and student input into the planning process. Please go to guides.library.yale.edu/bass2019 for ongoing project updates and a form for submitting comments and questions.

* edited 2/6/19 for clarity.