

LIBRARY HOURS PROPOSAL

GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT SENATE

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Prepared by GPSS Advocacy Committee



I. Overview

Graduate and professional students at Yale are consistently dissatisfied with library accessibility and the availability of study space. GPSS has undertaken a comparison of Yale libraries most used by graduate and professional students - Sterling, Bass, CSSI and Cushing - and the central libraries of peer institutions.

II. Environmental Scan and Vision

Peer Ivy League institutions and MIT have at least one library that closes circulation but maintains 24 hour access to at least part of the library for study and meeting space during the week. The exceptions are Yale and Princeton. Additionally, Yale libraries' weekend hours are the shortest among comparable institutions. (See Appendix A.) As a result, Yale's graduate and professional students have consistently provided feedback to the GPSS about their dissatisfaction with library hours.

GPSS surveyed the community and the environmental scan indicated the biggest concern with libraries was the hours they were open. Of 736 respondents, 52% did not rate the weekend hours positively, and of 763 respondents 30% did not rate the weekday hours positively. After reviewing the free responses to issues with the library, students who were unhappy with library hours were primarily unsatisfied with the closure of study space rather than library services.

In addition, graduate and professional students work continues throughout the year including spring break and the summer as scholarly research does not conform to the undergraduate schedule. The issue is specifically acute for graduate and professional students as they do not have 24/7 access to libraries as do the undergraduates in their residential colleges. As a result, the current library hours do not meet the academic needs of graduate and professional students.

University of Pennsylvania study space and MIT hours provide a possible model for Yale moving forward. Penn's Van Pelt library keeps its lowest floor open 24 hours during the week. It is available to all ID holders. One security guard checks IDs and bags as students enter and leave, and the circulation desk is closed. MIT offers three 24/7 study spaces located across campus attached to libraries. After the library closes, the areas can be accessed by swiping an ID card.

Penn and MIT's model is ideal for Yale's Thain Family Cafe and Bass Library. Its central location allows for easy access to the community and offers two options. First, the Thain Family Cafe offers an open study area outside of the main library that can remain accessible throughout the evening via card access. Second, Bass Library offers an ideal space for late night student

and proposed renovations, these proposed changes will allow the world-class resources of the library to be used to their full potential. Given its central importance to graduate and professional student research, the GPSS recommends that SML hours be extended to match those of Bass.

III. Conclusion

Yale has world-class resources dedicated to fostering academic excellence, few more important than its incredible libraries. To properly address the academic needs raised by students, library hours should be extended starting with Bass and then SML. This will guarantee a more accessible Yale.

Library Hours

■ open for circulation (Yale)
 ■ open for circulation (other univ.)
 ■ open for study only (other univ.)

