

# **LIBRARY HOURS PROPOSAL**

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**GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT SENATE  
GRADUATE STUDENT ASSEMBLY**

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Prepared by GPSS Advocacy Committee &  
GSA Facilities and Healthcare Committee



## **I. Overview**

Graduate and professional (G&P) students at Yale are consistently dissatisfied with library accessibility and the availability of study space. GPSS and GSA have undertaken a comparison of Yale libraries most used by G&P students - Sterling, Bass, CSSSI 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 weekday access to at least part of the library for study and meeting space. 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 G&P students have consistently provided feedback to the GPSS and GSA about their dissatisfaction with library hours.

A GPSS survey of the G&P community indicated that the biggest concern with libraries is the hours they are 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.

The issue is specifically acute for G&P students as they do not have 24/7 access to libraries or study spaces as do the undergraduates in their residential colleges. In addition, G&P students work continuously throughout the year, including spring break and the summer, yet the libraries operate on a significantly reduced schedule during breaks. As a result, the current library hours do not meet the academic needs of G&P students.

The University of Pennsylvania's and MIT's allocation of study space and library hours provide possible models for Yale moving forward. Penn's Van Pelt library keeps its lowest floor open to ID holders 24 hours during the week. 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 academic life. It provides individual and group study space along with access to books<sup>1</sup>, computing and printing. In line with Penn’s model, the circulation desk could close in the late evening and only security would be required. In order to bring Yale up in line with its peer institutions and to meet G&P academic needs, the following three phrases are recommended:

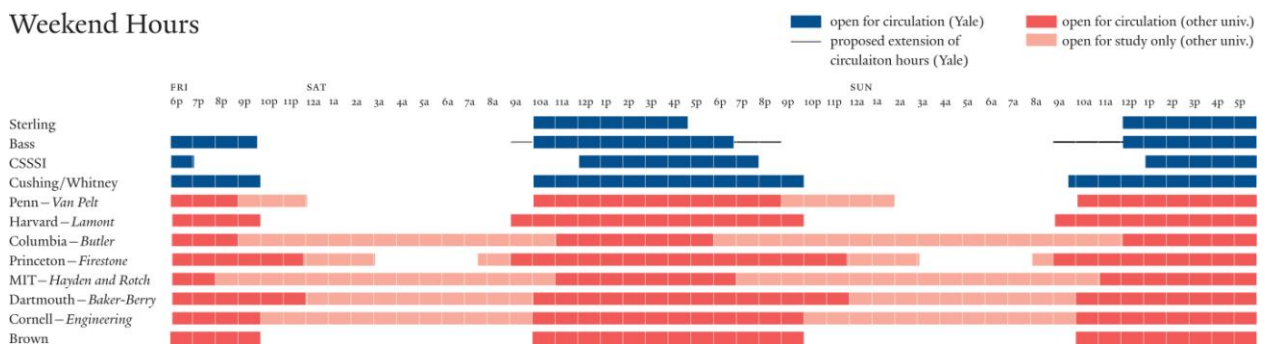
*Phase I: Extend Bass Library Weekend Hours*

Currently, Bass is open 18.5 hours on the weekend.<sup>2</sup> The average among the Ivies + MIT is 23.3 hours. In order to match the average number of circulation hours open on the weekend at peer institutions, it is proposed that the Bass Library hours be extended by 6 hours and scheduled as follows:

Saturday: 9am to 9pm (Increase 3 hours)

Sunday: 9am to 2am (Increase 3 hours)

**Weekend Hours**



*Phase II: 24/7 Access*

None of Yale’s libraries provide 24-hour space for quiet study (aside from very limited space for a few students at CSSSI). Columbia, MIT, Dartmouth, and Cornell all provide their students with study space 24/7, and the University of Pennsylvania and Brown provide such space during the week. On average, these elite universities provide access to library study space 156.8 hours every week. By comparison, Bass is open 103 hours per week--less than 2/3 of the average. To bring Yale on par with its peers, it is proposed that Bass Library provide access to study space 24/7. In line with the model at Penn, the circulation desk does not have to be open 24/7.

*Phase III: Extend Spring Break and Summer Hours*

During Spring Break, Sterling and Bass libraries are each open for 45 hours per week, which is

<sup>1</sup> For example, books placed on 24 hour reserve by professors would be accessible.

<sup>2</sup> Weekend is defined as 6pm Friday to 6pm Sunday.

more than a 50% reduction of normal hours. Most G&P students remain on campus during Spring Break, and this is an especially useful time to perform scholarly research because graduate courses are not meeting and Teaching Fellow duties are minimized. In order to allow G&P students to access materials and spaces essential to their work, it is proposed that Sterling and Bass hours be extended during Spring Break to match the rest of the semester.

G&P students often stay in New Haven throughout the summer as well, and this is also a prime opportunity to make progress on dissertation research and writing without the added responsibilities of coursework and teaching. Over the summer, Sterling library is open approximately 70% (53 vs. 74 hours) of the hours of flagship libraries at peer institutions, while Bass falls near the average (73 hours). However, this average does not take into account that some peer institutions also have 24/7 study spaces during the summer (see Appendix B). It is proposed that Sterling hours be revised to match those of Bass Library during the summer.

#### *Phase IV: Extend Sterling Memorial Library Hours*

SML is the largest library on campus and holds the greatest number of books. With the ongoing 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 G&P 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 of G&P students, library hours should be extended starting with Bass and then SML, especially on weekends and during breaks. 24/7 operation of space in Bass should also be implemented. These changes will guarantee a more accessible Yale.

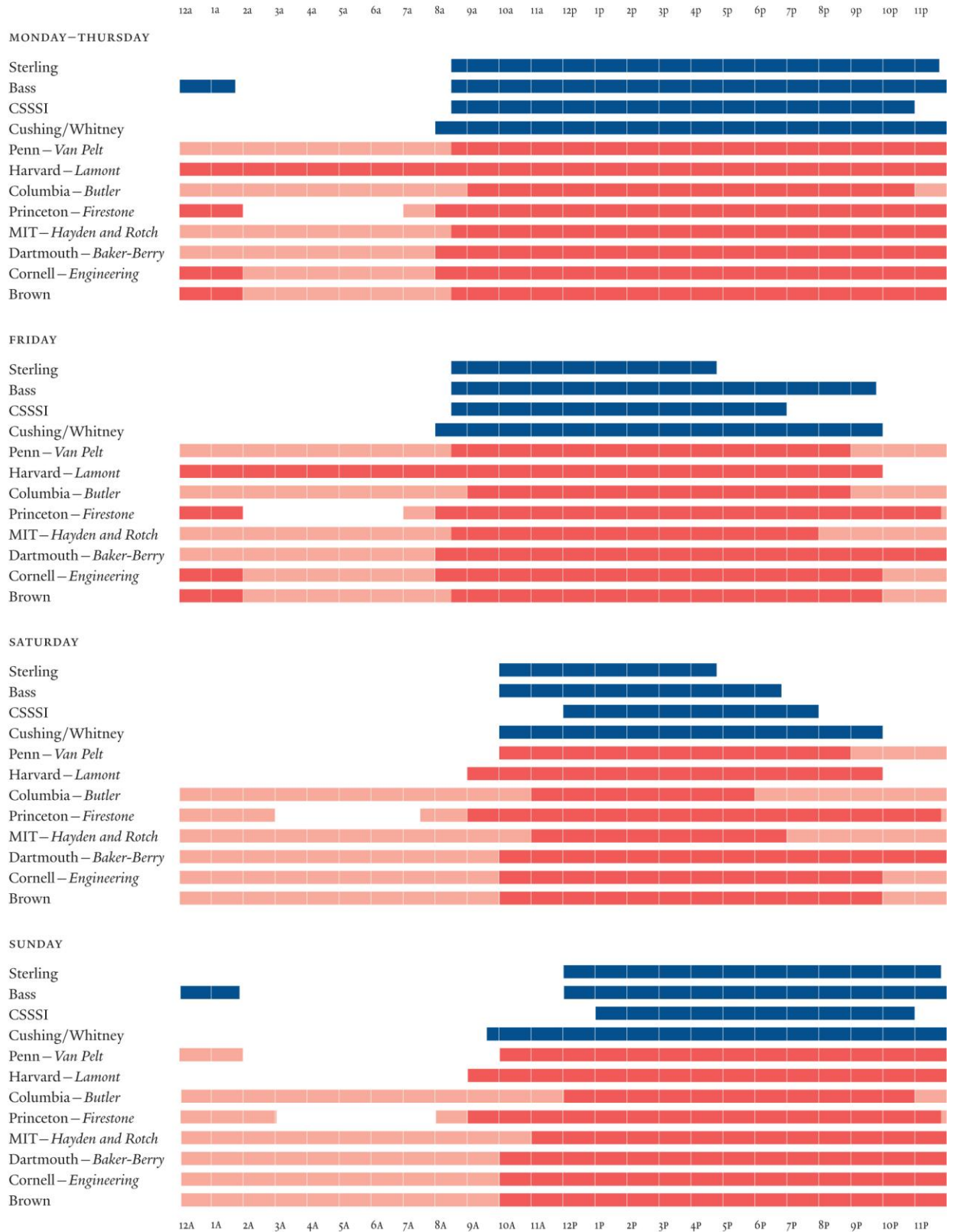
# Library Hours Overview

## Appendix A

■ open for circulation (Yale)

■ open for circulation (other univ.)

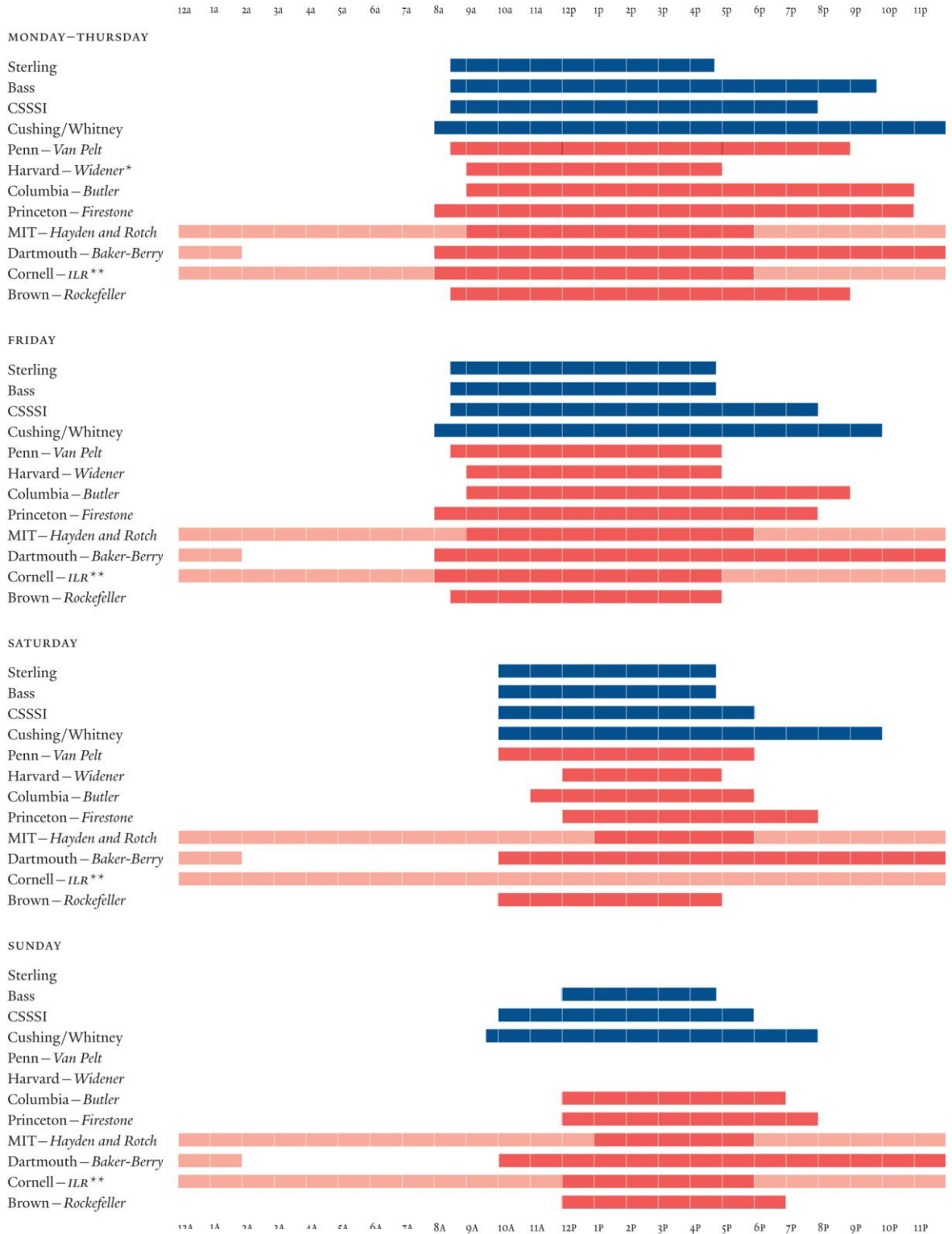
■ open for study only (other univ.)



## Appendix B

### Summer Hours

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



\* Hours are 9am-8pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays

\*\* 24/7 study space is available in the Engineering Library