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Books moved for more study space

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The opening of the two new residential colleges is not the only change coming to

Prospect Street next fall.

A science and social science library in Kline Biology Tower will lose more than 70,000 books over the summer to make room for additional study space. The cleared area will be filled with 72 seats, a map room with contemporary charts and geographic information workstations — the first room of its kind in any Yale library — and a studio equipped with the tools to create digital classroom resources. Many students have voiced concern over the availability of study space when 800 new undergraduates arrive at Yale College in the next four years, and the new study space in KBT was planned in response to such concerns.

“This was something we thought we needed to respond to the new colleges, but also to improve the current experience,” University Director of Science and Social Science Libraries Jill Parchuck said. “Knowing that we have very high gate counts, we thought it would be wise to create more study space.”

Formerly the site of a science library, the Center for Science and Social Science Information was created in January 2012 after the closing of the Social Sciences Library, which was located at the current site of the two new colleges. In addition to a total book count exceeding 150,000 volumes, the new center has 26 public computer workstations, five group study rooms and the computer

classroom closest to Science Hill.

Since its opening four years ago, the CSSSI has been well-received by the campus community. According to Parchuck, group study rooms are booked more than 2,500 different times per semester, and the center saw about 230,000 separate visits in 2015 alone.

Parchuck noted that the need to relocate the resources of the Social Science Library prior to the construction of the new colleges provided University librarians with an opportunity to ask the community how best to design an effective science and social science library for the 21st century. She added that the changes planned for next fall are a product of consultations and data-gathering efforts since the opening of the center.

“We currently refer to our space as a talking library — it is not expected to be super silent,” Parchuck said. “But one of the things we have heard is that it would be nice to have a designated quiet space, so we are looking to add that in now.”

She said the transfer of thousands of books to clear study space does not worry her, as the 70,000 volumes that are being moved out next summer are rarely ever checked out. The books will be moved to the library’s shelving facility in Hamden, where they can

be delivered to patrons in less than 12 hours, Parchuck said.

According to University Librarian Susan Gibbons, the influx of 800 additional undergraduate students over the next four years presents a number of challenges for the library system to provide the same experience for all members of the community. She estimated the increase in the undergraduate population will result in an extra \$1 million per year to maintain the University library system's current digital content licenses, and also expects to hire more librarians to help with undergraduate outreach programs.

While she acknowledged that providing adequate library study space for the expanded student body will still be a challenge, Gibbons noted that as with the CSSI, the expansion of study space also presents an opportunity for the library to adapt to the changing use patterns of its patrons.

“We have always been a place where students like to come to study — there is something about the quality of the space that is important,” Gibbons said. “But we want to make sure that students are making good use of the services we can provide.”

In addition to the renovations in the lower level of the CSSI, Gibbons said that she is exploring how to downsize the book collection

in Bass Library to create more study spaces as well. She noted that there will still be books in Bass after the planned downsizing, and that a sizable portion of the collection could be transferred to the book stacks in Sterling Memorial Library.

“That project will take several years to plan while we consider what should be the organizing principle for a book collection in Bass,” she said, offering summer 2018 or 2019 as tentative dates for the change.

