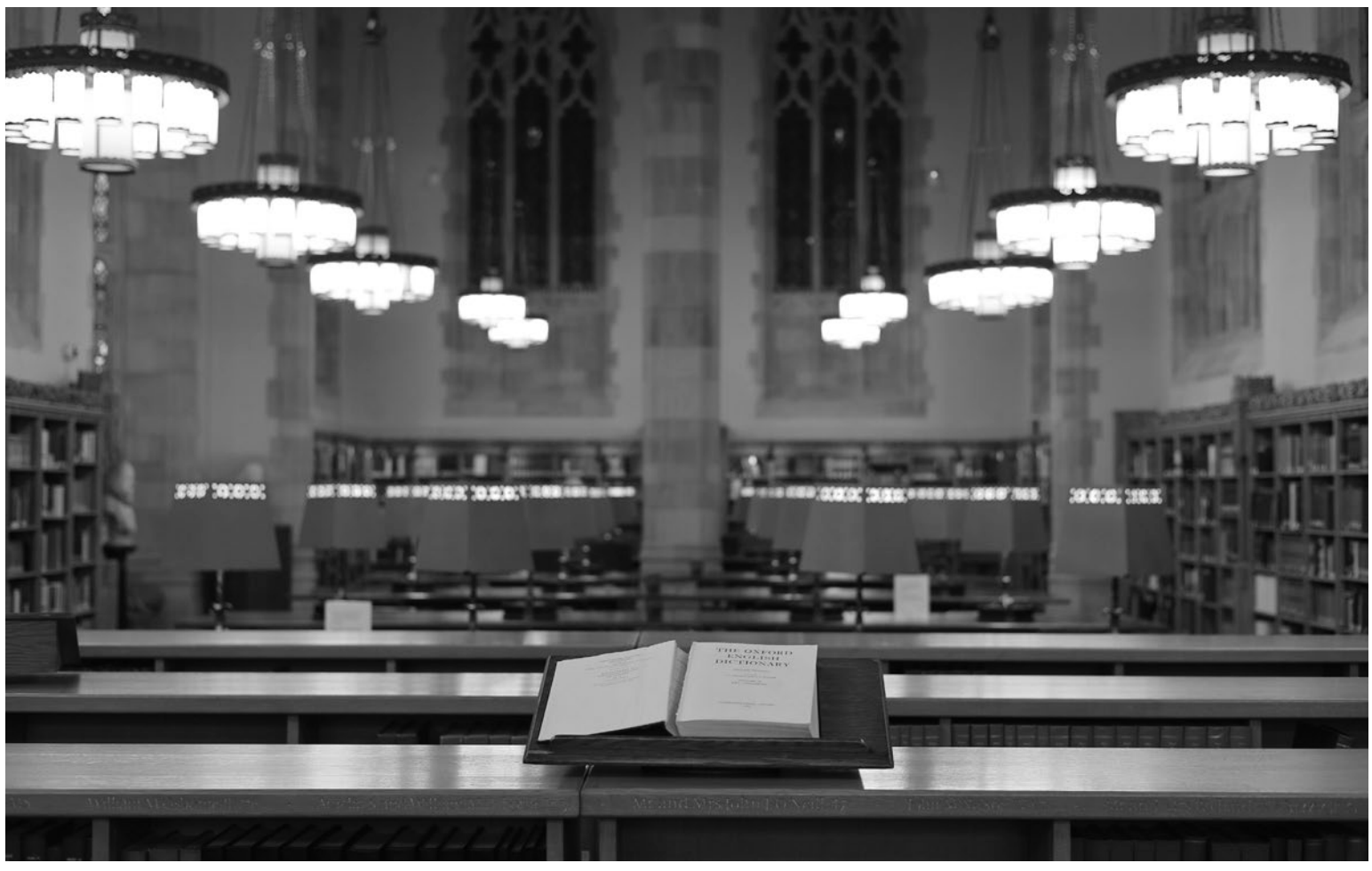
NEWS

"Honey honey, how you thrill me, a-ha, honey honey"
HONEY, HONEY ABBA

Library ramps up digitization amid drop in physical item circulation

BY EHI OCHE AND ADA GORDON
CONTRIBUTING REPORTERS



SHYAM SUVA / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

The circulation of physical Yale Library materials has dropped 65 percent over the last decade. Librarians across specialties say they are trying to increase student engagement through increased digitization efforts.

The Yale Library is working to digitize more of its collections as the circulation of physical materials has fallen significantly over the last decade.

Between 2016 and 2025, circulation of physical library materials through the Yale Library fell about 65 percent, from about 381,000 items in 2016 to about 132,000 items in 2025, according to Patricia Carey, the director of communications strategy for the library. Several librarians said they are looking to increase student engagement with library resources through increased digitization efforts.

In Yale's 2026 fiscal year, the Yale Library created about 460,000 new images of collection material and put about 3,800 newly digitized audio and video recordings online, according to Jonathan Manton, the director for digital collections and access at the Yale Library.

"Looking ahead, transformative digital access is one of the library's strategic priorities," Manton wrote in an email to the News, "so this is an area where students should expect significant expansion in the coming years.

Haruko Nakamura, Yale's librarian for Japanese studies, said part of the downtick in circulation is due to the pandemic, which shifted student interaction with digitized library materials. During that period, she said, access to print resources was limited, leading the library to adjust to meet student and faculty research needs.

"Overnight, we had to figure out how to turn a physical library system into a virtual library," Carey said in a phone interview.

Carla Baricz GRD '13 '17, the librarian for literature in English and comparative literature, said that despite the fall in materials usage figures over the last decade, the level of student engagement with the library's resources has remained relatively stable. Baricz said, however, that the format for much of that engagement has shifted.

"I do see more people requesting to read materials online," Baricz said. "One of the things that I work a lot on is thinking about our e-collections, our electronic collections in my subject areas and also some building of the collections in Overdrive."

Overdrive houses the Yale Library's online digital collection and includes a variety of both fiction and nonfiction works.

When it comes to research materials and archival databases, Carey said, "students at Yale are really lucky to have this extraordinary range of options.

She added that the Yale Library remains committed to maintaining and growing its print data collection, "with particular emphasis on materials that are not available in electronic form."

"There's definitely less use of print resources," Colin McCaffrey, the library's subject specialist for classics and philosophy, said, referring to those fields. "But for the actual discipline, reading is almost the point."

Looking toward the future, librarians said they are committed to ensuring the continuation of reading as a skill for students to foster and develop, both in and out of the classroom, through physical and digital media.

"Maybe we need to do a better job of reminding people why this is not just something that they need to do for work or to write a paper or to take a class, but it's actually a kind of practice of growth and of self development," Baricz said.

Yale Library's first online management system began in 1989.

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Affiliates celebrate 325 years of Yale at Old Saybrook site

BY LAIKA PATEL
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

OLD SAYBROOK, Conn. — Roughly 70 people commemorated Yale's 325th anniversary around a boulder marking the University's founding in Old Saybrook on Friday.

The Yale Boulder Commemorative Marker represents the site where Yale was founded and operated from 1701 to 1716. For the 325th anniversary, residential college deans, Yale Club of New Haven leadership and University professors gathered to mark the boulder, which the University still owns.

"Yale exists today because of all of us who are gathered here and many others, both come together to understand the importance of a university and its role; in preserving history and culture, illuminating our understanding of the human condition, offering solutions to timely and complex challenges, and improving the lives and the well being of our world," University Provost Scott Strobel said at the event.

After opening remarks, Marie McFarlin, the president of the Old Saybrook Historical Society, described Yale's founding in October 1701 as "an act of liberty." She also noted that the average class size from Yale's inception until 1716 was between three and nine students each year.



LAIKA PATEL / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Alumni, faculty and administrators gathered on Friday at the town 30 miles east of New Haven to reflect on the history of the University at the historic site of the Yale Boulder. Yale College relocated from Old Saybrook to New Haven in 1716.

The University's move from Old Saybrook to New Haven catalyzed the 1718 "Battle of the Books," where Old Saybrook residents seized over 250 books en route to New Haven as a form of protest.

Four speakers were invited to the stage to share reflections on Yale at 325 years of age. One speaker, Alison Cole '99, the executive director of the Yale Alumni Association, said that "it is the people, individuals and groups, who have been the beacons of Yale."

The speakers were followed by the placing of the commemorative marker and a singing rendition of "Bright College Years," Yale's unofficial alma mater, where alumni stood and waved white handkerchiefs.

Jay Wong '17, an associate fellow in Pierson College, wrote in a text message to the News that he came to the celebration to contend with Yale's past in order to consider the University's future.

"I came to the 325th anniversary celebration of Yale to hear the anthem of our past and to understand, more wholly, the weight and measure of our present moment," Wong wrote. "More still, it was to experience the full majesty in the quest of discovering what Yale symbolizes in the imagination of America and what it could symbolize for the rest of the world."

Eric Fleischmann '83 also said that it was a "memorable and historic event."

"One can only imagine how Yale would have developed had their effort succeeded," Fleischmann wrote in a text message, referencing the "Battle of the Books." "It might have become a quiet seaside campus, more picturesque than Princeton."

The Collegiate School was renamed to Yale College in 1718, in honor of its primary book donor, Elihu Yale.

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