

Bowdoin College Library

Timeline

1802: The Library is housed in Massachusetts Hall, the only building on campus.

1805: The Library moves to the 2nd floor of a new wooden Chapel; in 1848 the collections are transferred to Banister Hall, the east end of the current stone Chapel.

1903: The Library moves to the newly built Hubbard Hall.

1937: Hubbard Hall's original 4-floor bookstack is increased to 6 floors.

1945: Rare book room opens on the 2nd floor of Hubbard Hall. The room, which contains the original ceiling and woodwork from the library of Susan Dwight Bliss's 1908 Manhattan residence, is donated anonymously. Beginning in the 1950s, a portion of Bliss's own collection is housed in the room, which is then named for her in 1966.

1954: Collections outgrow Hubbard Hall and 25,000 books are temporarily moved to the Chapel basement.

1959: Beckwith Music Library opens in Gibson Hall.

As collections continue to grow, lack of space, the increasing demands of post-war enrollment, and an expanding curriculum place acute pressures on the library. By 1960 the decision is made to build a new separate structure to house the library.

1965: Hawthorne-Longfellow Library (H-L) opens. Books are moved here from Hubbard and the Chapel basement.

1975: Pierce Art Library opens in the Visual Arts Center.

1983-1984: H-L is expanded and linked with Hubbard Hall stacks through the basement of the building. Hubbard levels 1-5 are designated as open stacks, level 6 as a study area; 4 faculty studies added on levels 2-5. Increased storage capacity for Special Collections & Archives (SC&A) is provided in a climate-controlled area in H-L.

1985: Sills Hall's Language Lab is renovated and renamed the Language Media Center. Administration is transferred to the library.

1991: Hatch Science Library opens.

1993: The 1st floor of H-L is reorganized to accommodate new technologies and to create service points and redesigned workspaces for staff. The Electronic Classroom (ECR) and technology instruction are established in the basement.

2000-2004: Major renovations to H-L include the main and basement levels, SC&A, and Nixon Lounge (more natural light; new reference desk, furniture, and lighting; expansion of SC&A, improved technology infrastructure; sprinkler fire suppression system).

2003: To relieve overcrowding in the stacks, 20,000 books are relocated to an out-of-state, commercially managed offsite storage facility. Over the next 15 years, an additional 59,000 volumes from H-L, SC&A, and the branch libraries will be moved in response to collection growth and the loss of stack space as a result of building renovations.

2015: The Media Commons is constructed in the basement of H-L to support multi-media use and creation. Video collections are moved from the Language Media Center in Sills Hall and that branch library is closed.

2016: Telepresence Classroom is constructed in the H-L Media Commons and new, mobile furniture added to the open space.

2017: H-L 1st floor is renovated to create the Research Lab, to support student research and collaboration, and the Innovation Lab, the new home of Academic Technology & Consulting (AT&C). The library Technical Services Department is moved to AT&C's former space on the 3rd floor of Hawthorne-Longfellow Hall.

2018: H-L 2nd floor is renovated to create the Test Center and an expanded Faculty Research Commons. The Exhibit Gallery is redesigned and new display cases are added over the following three years, completing the project in 2021.

2019: Opening of the Library Annex, a climate-controlled facility near campus that provides high-density shelving for 200,000 volumes. Collections previously housed remotely are relocated to Brunswick.

2022: Academic, Technology & Consulting moves out of H-L and the Baldwin Center for Learning and Teaching (BCLT) moves into the space previously known as the Innovation Lab. A dedicated classroom for Special Collections & Archives instruction (the Learning Lab) is constructed on the north side of the 3rd floor.

Current Spaces

Hawthorne-Longfellow Library

- Building opens in 1965; expanded in 1984; renovated 2000-2004.
- 71,382 sq. ft.
- 922,381 volumes (H-L and Hubbard).
- 630 total seats (open seating, carrels, and group spaces).
- 6 group study rooms; Pierce Reading Room for quiet study.
- Vending café and student lounge.
- 26 public computers; printers, scanners, and microform reader/printers.
- George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections & Archives (includes Reading Room, Learning Lab, and Exhibit Gallery). Collections comprise 60,506 volumes and 4,385.5 linear feet of archival and manuscript materials.
- Media Commons (includes Media Lab, Telepresence Classroom, Screening/Seminar room, and four recording studios).
- Electronic Classroom (ECR) (25 computers).
- Research Lab (mobile tables and chairs and a multimedia workstation to support class instruction and collaboration).
- Ramp Gallery, student exhibition space.
- Faculty Study Commons.
- Chandler and Nixon meeting rooms.

- Test Center, managed by the Accessibility Office, Student Affairs.
- Baldwin Center for Learning and Teaching (BCLT), a co-located academic support service that reports to the Dean of Academic Affairs.

Hubbard Stacks

- 10,202 sq. ft.
- Includes student study carrels, faculty studies, and the Abrahamson Reading Room (6th floor).

Beckwith Music Library, Gibson Hall

- Building opens in 1959; renovated and expanded in 1994.
- 1,552 sq. ft.
- 35,064 volumes, primarily scores and sound recordings, as well as new books about music & current music periodicals. (The majority of music books and journals are housed in H-L.)
- 22 seats.
- 4 public computers, printer/copier, AV playback equipment, keyboard.

Hatch Science Library

- Building opens in 1991; renovated in the mid-1990s in conjunction with the construction of Druckenmiller Hall. 2nd floor renovated in 2021 to create two classrooms.
- 16,832 sq. ft.
- 84,115 volumes.
- 174 seats (open seating and group spaces); 2 group study/seminar rooms; 2 classrooms.
- 5 public computers, printer/scanner, 3-D printer, GALCove geographic analysis lab.

Pierce Art Library, Visual Arts Center

- Building opens in 1975.
- 1,389 sq. ft.
- 16,061 volumes, predominantly highly illustrated exhibition catalogs and monographs (non-circulating). (The majority of art books and journals are housed in H-L.)
- 20 seats.
- 2 public computers, printer/copier.

Susan Dwight Bliss Room, Hubbard Hall

- Room is installed in 1945.
- 542 sq. ft.
- 1,200 volumes, including many examples of fine and elaborate European bindings, relating primarily to the fine arts, French and English history and literature, and European and Asian travel.

Library Annex, off campus storage

- Facility opens in 2019.
- High-density shelving, with a capacity for 200,000 volumes.
- 90,015 volumes from the library's circulating collections.