Library Hours Plan

November 2021

The Library Administration Team (LAT) has approved a three-year calendar for Princeton University Library (PUL) hours based on a set of core principles.

Summary of changes: PUL hours would be more similar across locations. Library hours would be set well in advance and in harmony with the new academic calendar. Users would have a common understanding of hours and service expectations.

Context: Prior to the pandemic, each location would set their hours separately, often based on staffing constraints. During the pandemic, we launched a new LibCal system that provides greater coordination of hours. We noted variation in closing times (4.45 pm, 5 pm, 8.45 pm, 10.45 pm, 11:45 pm, 2 am) and the short planning horizon for hours.

Building Hours (link)

LibCal Calendars

The current setup is:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>d. Microforms</td>
<td>e. Marquand Library at Firestone</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Cotsen Children's Library</td>
<td>g. Milberg Gallery</td>
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<td>h. Special Collections</td>
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4. Lewis and Engineering Libraries
   a. GIS and Map Center
5. Mendel
6. Mudd Library
7. Stokes

Principles for Building and Service Hours

1. Building access hours would be published on a three-year calendar that is tied to the academic calendar, with annual review.
   a. User experience is improved when hours are simple, reliable, consistent and easy to remember. Round numbers are better for users than quarter-hour and half-hour limits.
   b. When possible, all campus library locations should prioritize consistency, keeping in mind that there may occasionally be limits imposed by building restrictions.
2. PUL's physical spaces serve undergraduates, graduate students, faculty and scholars. Keeping undergraduate needs in mind:
   a. During academic semesters, core in-person services for patrons should be reliably available during regular business hours. Such services include circulation/information desks, equipment lending desks, guard/security desks, and the Firestone Access Office.
   b. Core in-person services would be available during limited hours, when possible, on staff holidays during the academic semesters.
3. Uses of physical spaces would be considered in three categories: building access, self-service uses, and mediated uses.
   a. Self-service uses include browsing general collections, using workstations and study spaces. These should be designed to be staffed by student workers and made available during evenings and weekends. Study spaces in particular should be made available for late-night use on Sundays through Thursdays.
   b. Mediated uses include staffed reading rooms, assistance with specialized equipment or collections, consultations and research assistance. Since these are likely to require staffing by librarians and staff with specialized expertise, expectations for mediated uses should be clearly set as weekday business hours. There may be a need for occasional flexibility for special events such as Reunions. Access to non-general collections-based services are generally limited to weekday University business hours to maintain security.
   c. Services needed for undergraduate class projects should be reliably available in the evenings Sunday through Thursday.
4. Locations that are dependent on student staffing should develop a clear plan to call in student workers from other locations, when needed. Lack of staffing should not be considered a reason to close a location or set inconsistent hours if another location can share staff in a timely manner.
5. Assessment is needed to confirm if spaces that are open outside business hours need to be. If foot traffic is negligible, locations should reduce evening and weekend hours so that student workers and staff are not asked to staff spaces that are minimally used.

Patterns for Hours per Day

We have set hours in chunks, rather than having a range of opening and closing times, moving towards:

- Standard Weekday Business Hours: 9 am to 5 pm
- Late Weekday Evening Hours: 5 pm to 9 pm
- Late Weekday Evening Hours: 9 pm to midnight
- Standard Weekend Hours: 11 am to 5 pm
- Late Weekend Evening Hours: 5 pm to 9 pm
- Late Weekend Evening Hours: 9 pm to midnight
• Limited Holiday Hours: 1 to 5 pm
• Early opening: 8 to 9 am
• Standard Summer Weekday Hours: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Patterns by Time of Year

We have created patterns tied to the academic calendar for the University:

1. Academic Semesters
   a. Default
   b. Fall and Spring Breaks
   c. Extended hours at end of semesters (Reading Days and Finals)
   d. Extra Extended Hours - two days before Deans Date - Firestone only
   e. Staff Holidays during semesters - Labor Day and Thanksgiving
2. Summer Hours
3. Winter Break - All locations closed during staff holidays
4. Wintersession
5. Staff Holidays outside academic semesters - All locations closed
6. Special days such as Commencement, Reunions, etc.

Expectations by Location and Service

We have placed services in categories:

1. Building Access
   a. Firestone has the longest hours, helped by the guard desk
   b. Lewis and Engineering Libraries offer longer hours than the other branches
   c. Architecture, EAL, Mendel and Stokes are moving toward more consistent hours
2. Special Collections Firestone (SCF), Special Collections Mudd (SCM) and Special Collections Marquand follow standard business hours and
   close 15 minutes early to secure collections.
   a. Marquand in Firestone follows a service-hours model during renovations
3. Exhibition Galleries - Milberg and Cotsen - limited hours with some early evening and weekend availability
4. Desks - At least one desk per campus library location should be staffed throughout the building’s open hours.
   a. Firestone Access Desk - Needs to be reliably tied to building hours
   b. Firestone Circ - Needs to be reliably tied to building hours
   c. Firestone Info - Hours can vary based on staffing
5. Services - Hours can vary based on staffing, and may move to appointments over time, reducing the need for additional calendars. Services that
   have moved off the LibCal Calendar include: Chat Reference, Makerspace consultations and DSS.