



Yale College Council
Shipping Solutions

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INTRODUCTION

For undergraduates at Yale College, there are currently two major options for shipping and receiving packages: the United States Postal Service and the Yale Student Receiving Center on 250 Church St.

The Post Office accepts both standard mail and packages from all major carriers. In order to be eligible for this service students must pay a fee ranging from \$76 per year to \$314 per year depending on the size of box they reserve. The Post Office is the most accessible package pick-up point for students in 10 out of 14 colleges; that, coupled with being the only place to receive letters, makes the Post Office highly subscribed to among undergraduates in Yale College who share the postal service with the New Haven community. This is in contrast to the Yale Student Receiving Center.

The Yale Student Receiving Center only accepts packages from UPS, DHL, and FedEx; students cannot receive envelope mail or USPS packages. According to an employee, the Receiving Center receives upwards of 1500 packages during peak periods (beginning and end of semesters) with the majority of the packages being from Amazon. This is the more convenient location for students living in Silliman, Timothy Dwight, Benjamin Franklin, and Pauli Murray.

In the past, some Residential Colleges--such as Silliman and Saybrook--have allowed students to receive packages by having them shipped to the Head of College Office. This practice has fallen out of favor in recent years because of the logistical strains it places on the Head of College Office coupled with lack of storage.

PEER INSTITUTIONS

Many of Yale's peer institutions have something similar to Yale's Student Receiving Center, though many have expanded their own receiving capabilities. For example, MIT has upwards of 14 receiving rooms scattered around campus for students to send packages to. This decreases the burden on the local post office, provides students with more convenient pick-up locations, and expedites the time from when a package arrives on campus to when it is available to pick-up. Other universities have taken different approaches to address the growing number of packages and where students are receiving packages from.

The University of Pennsylvania has taken a creative approach to addressing the problems faced by their students: they partnered with Amazon to bring an Amazon receiving center to campus. Barbara Lea-Kruger, the director of Communications and External Relations at UPenn, was able to expand upon how this project came to fruition.

The administration at UPenn noticed student's frustration with their overwhelmed, local USPS office; this, coupled with the fact students living off-campus frequently had packages stolen, led them to look into alternative solutions. Amazon approached representatives from UPenn at a NACS (National Association of College Services) conference as, at that time, they were looking to expand into the college campus market. UPenn thought this was an interesting endeavor and after some research, found out that around 40% of their packages were coming from Amazon.^{1,2}

After identifying a clear interest among students for Amazon services on campus, representatives from the corporation visited campus to work with administration on setting up a receiving center that doubled as a study space for students. Amazon leases the space on campus from UPenn and is adjacent to the largest dining hall on campus. It officially opened in 2016 and, based on our conversation with an administration at Penn, has been a resounding success. Students have been able to receive Amazon packages more efficiently and the lockers have reduced the stress that a college campus can have on the United States Postal Service Office.

DATA ANALYSIS

Results of YCC Fall Survey

The purpose of the YCC Fall Survey was for us to collect data from the student body regarding their feelings about package and mail receiving resources available to them at Yale.

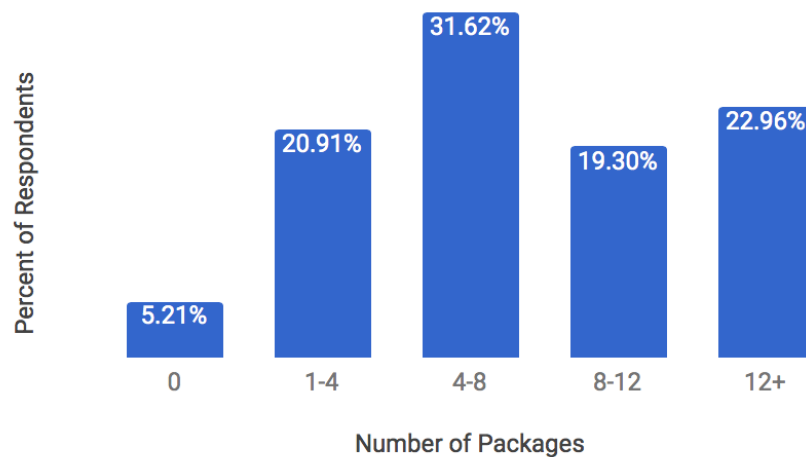
The responses received suggested that the undergraduate student body was largely dissatisfied with the mail receiving options available to them, raising the question of how current and future student needs can be met.

¹ <https://www.cnet.com/news/only-amazon-can-open-a-college-bookstore-with-no-books/>

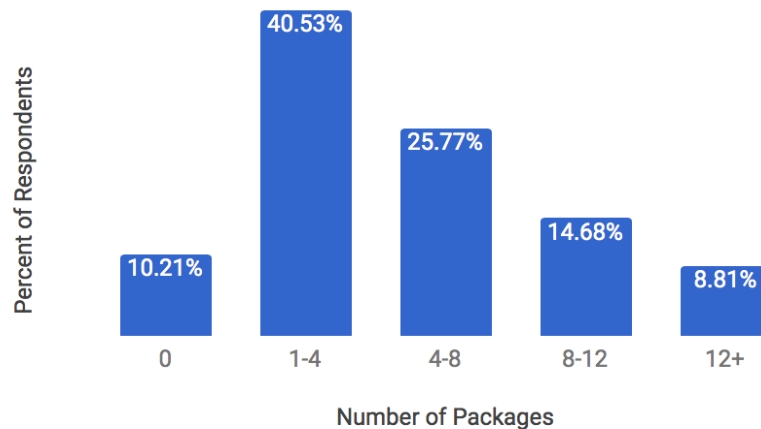
² <https://penncurrent.upenn.edu/news/amazon-delivery-center-opens-on-penn-s-campus>

To begin, we wanted to look at the approximate number of packages that were being sent to Yale each semester. During our discussions with Post Office and Receiving Center staff, it was suggested that there was a large influx of packages at the beginning of each semester that eventually tapered off. A commonly voiced opinion is that the Post Office is overburdened with packages which leads to the delay students experience from the time their package actually arrives to when they can pick it up. It is understandable if, at the Post Office, students experience this delay during the first month of school if there is an influx in packages shipped to school, but less acceptable if this is persistent throughout the entirety of a semester. To address all of this, the first question focuses on total number of packages students receive per semester, while the second question asks specifically about the number of packages that students receive during the first month of school.

Packages Received at Yale Every Semester



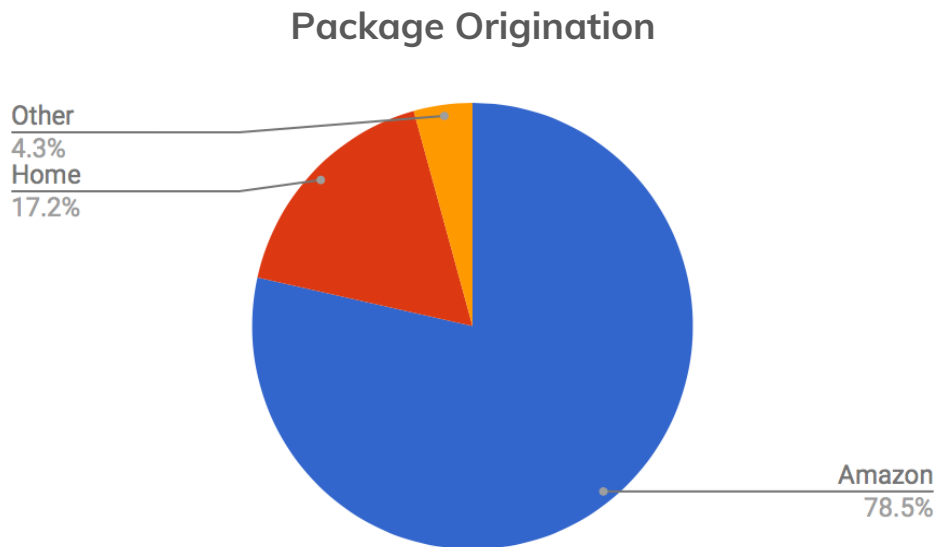
Packages Received in First Month of School



As shown by the data, the majority of students (31.82%) receive between 4 - 8 packages at Yale per semester. It is interesting to note that the second highest percentage of respondents (22.96%) receive 12+ packages (around one a week) per semester. If the data is aggregated, the average Yale student receives around seven (7) packages per semester. This works out to the undergraduate population receiving around 38,000 packages a semester, or about 350 packages per day (including weekends and breaks).

The third question we asked was asking students to tell us where the majority of their packages were being shipped from. We wanted this information because it would better help us formulate recommendations to suit the needs of students. For example, the Student Package Receiving Center on 250 Church Street doesn't accept USPS mail, so if we found that a large number of students relied on that carrier (most packages sent from home are via USPS because of relative cost) we would adjust the recommendations we made. In contrast, if most packages were shipped via UPS from Amazon, then Amazon offers their own shipping solutions that we could implement on campus.

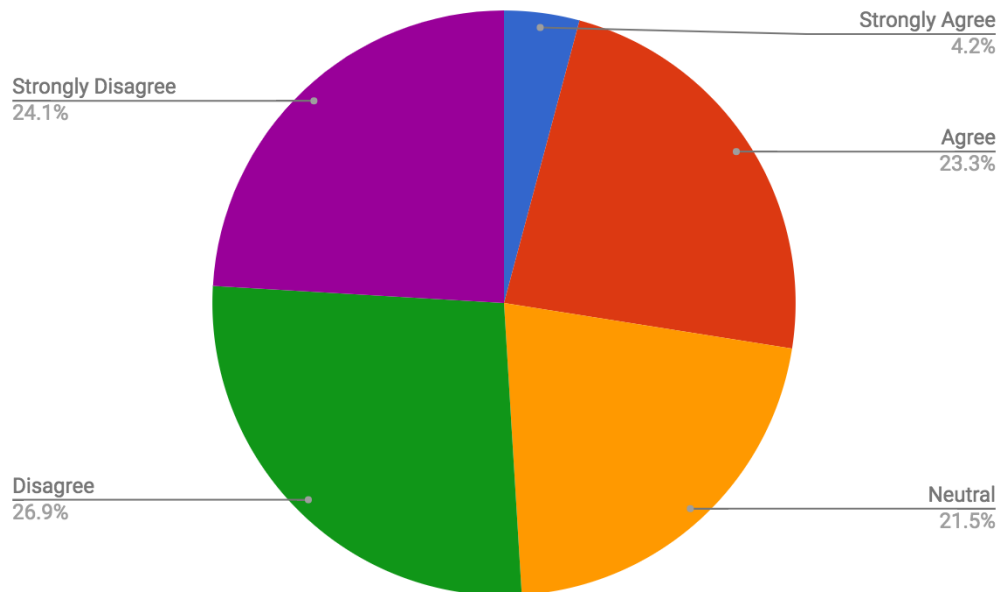
After surveying the undergraduate student body, the result is as follows:



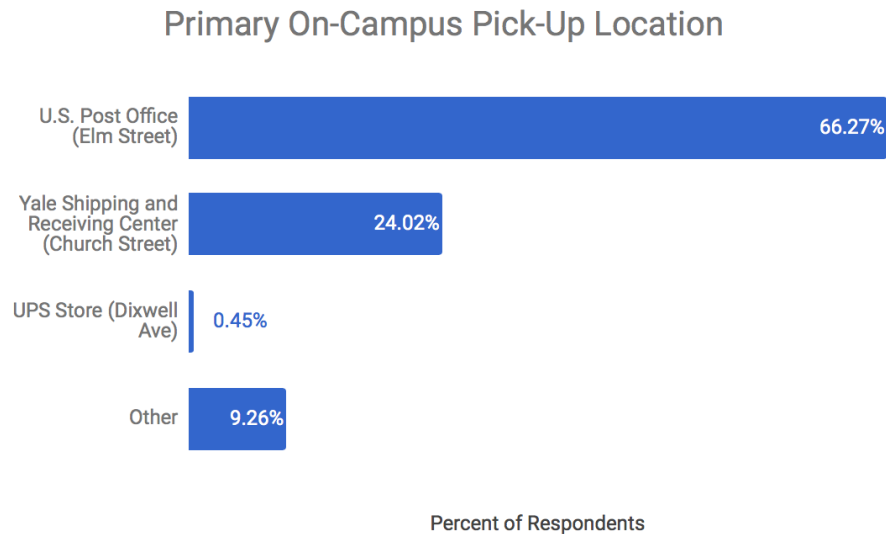
According to the Fall Survey data, 78.5% of the packages received on campus (around 29,000 a semester) come from Amazon. This is high, especially in comparison to University of Pennsylvania, which found it necessary to partner with Amazon after finding out that around 40% of the packages shipped to campus were ordered from the Seattle-based company.

The fourth question we asked was whether students were satisfied with their package pickup/shipping experience at Yale. Anecdotally, the YCC has consistently heard from students who were furious with the inefficiencies of the Post office; students have described inordinate wait times for the package to be processed and long wait-times once it was. This level of frustration was evidenced by the hundreds of students who volunteered to be in focus groups about our issue. And it was confirmed in the results of the survey, **more than 50% of students were dissatisfied with their shipping experience**, while only just over 25% were satisfied. Shipping is not a controversial issue, so to have dissatisfaction on these levels is indicative of the need for change.

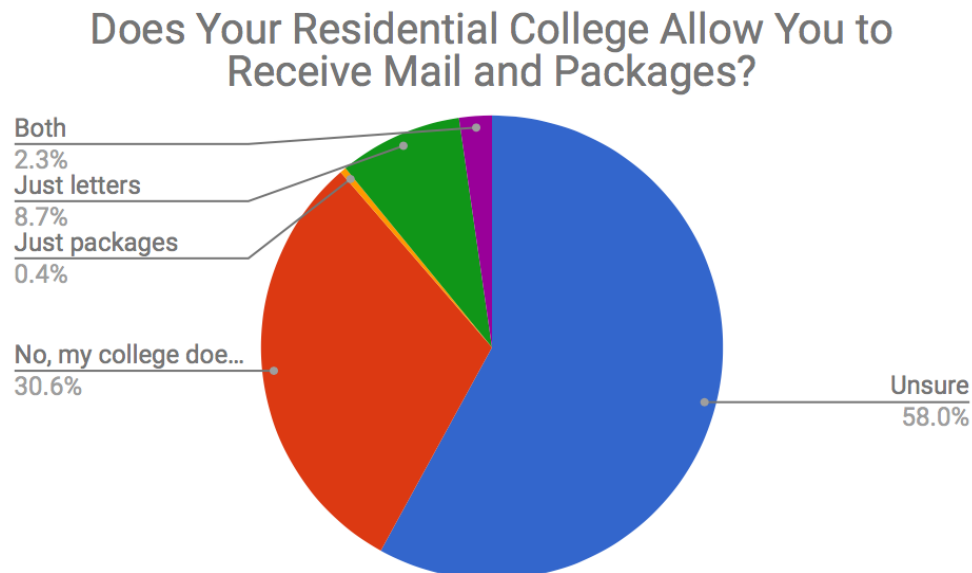
Student Satisfaction with Shipping Experience



The fifth question we asked was for students to provide us with their primary pick-up location was.



As shown by the data, the primary pick-up location for 66.27% of students is the Post Office; this is to be expected given that 10 out of the 14 colleges are geographically closest to that pick-up location. This data also lends itself to further accentuate the extreme burden that the Post Office and Student Receiving Center are under. In a related question, we asked students if they could receive mail & packages at their Residential College.



The majority of students were either unsure whether or not their Residential College allowed them to receive packages and mail, and around a third of students thought that their student didn't allow it. In many colleges, there seemed to be confusion over what and wasn't allowed: some people would respond that their college only allowed letters or packages, while others in the same college would say that they were not allowed to receive mail of any type. There seems to be a need for the Yale undergraduate population to be better educated on this topic by their residential college as there is a lot of contradicting information currently circulating.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The YCC's recommendations do not focus on the post office, which we believe would be difficult and nearly impossible for Yale to change. Instead, we focus on alternatives that would increase the efficiency with which students could receive their packages.

- **Work with Amazon to bring Amazon lockers to Yale.** They could be installed in a relatively small area in a current building, or an Amazon shipping center could be added to the campus. According to the data collected in the fall survey, nearly 80% of students receive the majority of their packages from Amazon.
 - The post office storage room is often overwhelmed by Amazon packages, so creating this separate center would take enormous pressure off of the post office.
 - Multiple Amazon shipping centers would allow students in Morse, Stiles, Benjamin Franklin, Pauli Murray, and Timothy Dwight easier access to their packages.
 - Amazon lockers have worked very effectively at peer institutions who were faced with similar shipping challenges, most notably the University of Pennsylvania

Next Steps

- Contact Amazon to assess their interest in partnering with Yale to bring Amazon lockers to campus and to inquire about the costs of acquiring lockers (Amazon does not provide a lot of information online about their agreements

with colleges, but it is beneficial for them to install lockers so we are confident that they would be making a deal that is beneficial to Yale)

- Appoint students and an administrator to head the program and ensure that this becomes a reality
- Identify space(s) that could be used to house the Amazon lockers

CONCLUSION

Students at Yale rely on their ability to receive packages in a timely and efficient manner for everything from books to packages from home to school supplies to clothing. The Yale Post Office is not equipped for the large volume of packages that are being shipped in our modern age of online shopping. The delays and inefficiencies of the Yale Post Office have caused a majority of Yale students to say they are dissatisfied with their shipping/package pick up experience. And it is not fair to expect a Post Office branch to handle the inordinate workload placed on it by Yale students.

Given the survey results outlined above, we believe that the most effective solution would be to bring Amazon lockers to Yale's campus. Given that a vast majority of the packages causing the delays at the post office are ordered from Amazon, this would target the main source of the issue in a clean and efficient way. It would improve the experience of students picking up their packages and it would help the Post Office--which doesn't just serve Yale students--to run more smoothly.

This is a solution, as noted above, that has worked very well at the University of Pennsylvania. The Amazon lockers have been a huge hit among students and reduced the burden placed on their local post office.

This is a problem that Yale students care about, and an Amazon receiving center would be an efficient fix. It would help the New Haven residents who could use their post office without long lines of Yale students; it would help the Post Office, who would be freed from the mounds of Amazon packages; and it would help the Yale students who need school supplies or books in an efficient manner.