“We insisted on built-in bookshelves because books are what we are about and we carry our libraries with us,” says Tatter. “Now we can just roll across the room and get books from our shelves and say to our students, ‘This is what I’m talking about.’”

Echoes Myers, “I have all the resource materials I need right at my fingertips.”

Faculty from different disciplines were purposely placed in offices side-by-side to foster greater collaboration.

“We have conversations all the time about the connections between what we are doing,” says Tatter. “Now we can talk to colleagues across the hall about that connection.”

“Notes Sprayberry, “The nice thing is having all of us in one building for the first time. It’s my first year in 16 years at the college with my colleagues together in one place. It’s more convenient, and it improves collegiality.”

Having the humanities programs all in one location has resulted in more convenience for faculty and students, and it is creating greater opportunities for faculty-student collaboration.

“When your office is right across the hall from the classroom, there is not a clear delineation between office and classroom time,” Sprayberry explains. “If I am having a conversation with a student in class, then I can just continue it in the office by just stepping across the hall. I’ve started to notice that students come into my office before class now.”

“Students find it easier because they know we are all together,” notes Myers.

“It’s so convenient for the faculty and the students,” says Dr. Larry Brasher, Denson Franklin Professor of Religion. “Quite truthfully, it’s so much easier and efficient to class preparation because our offices and resources are right down the hall from the classrooms. It makes for a much better use of time as well.”

Sara Doughton, a senior English major from Homewood, is just one of those students benefiting from a Humanities Division under one roof.

“One of the best things about the new humanities building is the centralization of the professors,” she says. “If I’m working on an interdisciplinary project—one that deals with history, English, and religion, for instance—I can talk to Dr. Ulrich [David, professor of English], go across the hall to Dr. Lester [Mark, W. Michael Atchison Professor of History and Legal Education], then head upstairs to talk to Dr. Brasher [Larry, Denson Franklin Professor of Religion].

Additionally, the offices themselves are much more conducive to one-on-one learning and discussion. All of the offices have space for the professor and student to sit comfortably, face-to-face, and talk about any questions or problems the student might have, or just interact on a casual basis. It definitely assists in the learning process.”

The Academic Resource Center

One of the newest and most unique approaches to academic support, the college’s Academic Resource Center is a multi-faceted approach to student assistance. The center enhances, coordinates, and promotes the academic support services available to students, faculty, and staff at the college. The cross-curricular centers and labs that form the ARC offer training, tutoring, and general assistance in a wide range of concepts, skills, and practices relevant to academic achievement, with a special emphasis on information fluency.

The Academic Resource Center’s components provide all BSC students with support in the areas of writing, speech, foreign languages, technology, critical thinking, data analysis, and library research. The Writing Center, Speech Center, and Foreign Languages Lab areas of the ARC are all located in the Berte Humanities Center.

“All three of the Academic Resource Center labs that are in the Humanities Center are at least twice as large as they were in their previous locations, which were scattered around campus,” explains Tatter. “All are now electronic facilities, which is a giant leap from how they operated before. And there have been major increases in student use in the areas, with one reason being their central location to the humanities faculty and the classrooms. The labs are much more visible now.”

All three labs have been beneficiaries of Parents Fund contributions in recent years, providing for much-needed equipment and technology. Gifts to the 2003-04 Parents Fund are supporting the Writing Center.

The Foreign Languages Lab

The Foreign Languages Laboratory has relocated from the basement of the Library where its technology consisted of audio-visual capabilities to a state-of-the-art computer-based lab in the Berte Humanities Center. The lab offers students a more participatory and effective approach to language learning by allowing the incorporation of foreign language CD-Rom programs, the Internet, video recordings, and other synchronous tools into the learning process.

Foreign Languages Lab Coordinator Kim Thomas (standing) and Chloé Andrus, a sophomore psychology major from Birmingham, work on an assignment in the computer-based laboratory. Andrus has formed a French Club that meets once a week in the lab to practice French, watch French films, and study together, among other activities.