learning process. Soon students will have the capability to record themselves speaking a foreign language and then e-mail that sound file directly to their professors for critiquing and grading purposes.

Kim Thomas, who coordinates the Foreign Languages Lab, says that language students are extremely excited about the new lab, and for good reason. The lab boasts 26 computer workstations, projection unit and large screen, lounge/study area, and multi-media room, all in a very inviting atmosphere that is three times bigger than the old lab location.

“We went strictly from audio cassette tape and showing videotape in a windowless basement tiny room to an open room, bright, and computer-based laboratory where we can do so many other things,” explains Thomas. “The physical space is much more appealing and open. Students come in voluntarily to meet, do homework, rehearse, and practice. Language students are making this their own little hangout, which is what we had in mind when we designed it. I’m even surprised at how quickly the students embraced the space and made it their own.”

Thomas says that having a Foreign Languages Lab located in the same facility as the faculty who teach the languages and the students who learn them benefits all involved.

“The professors are tying the lab more into the classroom; it’s seen more as part of the language learning process,” she says. “It’s also much more efficient and easier for me as liaison between students and faculty, and also for the students because they can work in the lab and if they need to consult with a professor, they simply run upstairs and meet with them. It’s also much easier for me to consult with faculty. It’s much more convenient for all of us.”

The lab also opens up more opportunities for the students, says Carrie Comer, senior French major from Vestavia Hills and a tutor in the lab.

“One of the most amazing things is that before this year we were stuck in a tiny little room in the basement of the Library where we only had audio-visual equipment for the language lab purposes,” says Comer. “Here we have a lot more interactive and a lot more ability for students to use multi-media to learn the foreign languages. We also have a media center where the students can use a digital communicator to then create videos of their own to use in class. There are just so many more opportunities to involve students.”

The Speech Center

The mission of the Speech Center is to improve the students’ capabilities in the arena of oral presentation, assisting in all areas related to public address. Good public speaking skills and making presentations are essential skills, and the center helps enhance and refine students’ skills in public speaking, making presentations, interviewing, voice and diction, and debate.

“We assist students with their needs concerning any sort of presentation, speech, or interview, including job interviews,” says Speech Center Coordinator Jamie Lawrence. “We provide critiques of class presentations, assistance on how to organize a speech, how to do an outline, how to give a speech from a paper, how long it should be, how to stand, how to speak, what to do with your hands, and what to look at—all the necessary aspects of an effective presentation.

“We probably have twice as much usable space in the new