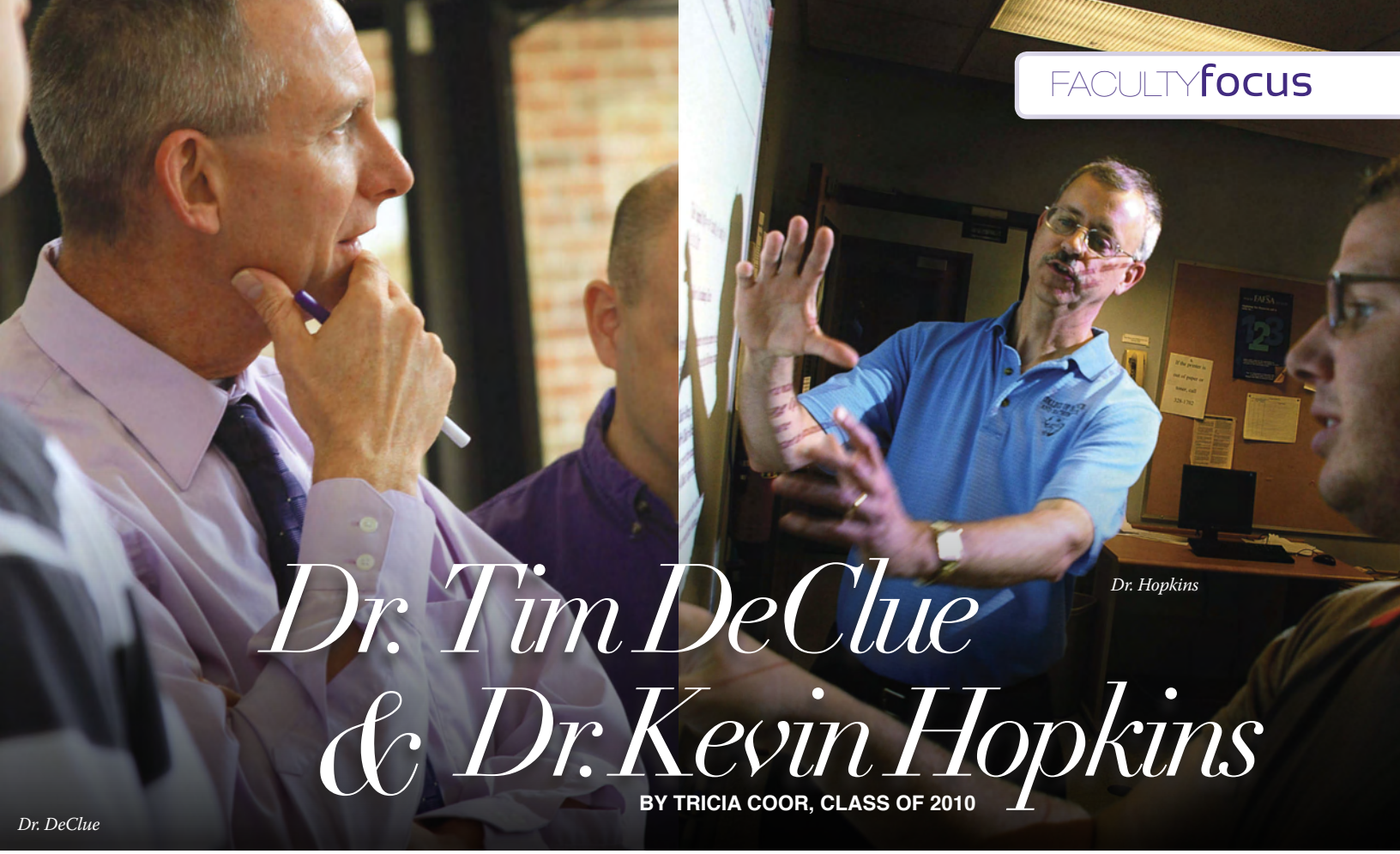


Dr. DeClue

Dr. Hopkins

Dr. Tim DeClue & Dr. Kevin Hopkins

BY TRICIA COOR, CLASS OF 2010

Dr. Tim DeClue

It's not every day that you hear about a student who graduates from college with a music degree and ends up as a computer information science (CIS) professor. But for Dr. Tim DeClue, that is exactly what happened.

Dr. DeClue has embraced his interest in computer science and has grown with it over his 25 years at SBU. He now is the chair of the CIS department and has taught nearly every course in the department.

After graduating with a degree in music, Dr. DeClue decided he did not want to pursue a career in music. He was then left clueless as to what he should seek as a career.

At the time he was working as an admission recruiter for his alma mater, Northwest Missouri State University. As a result of working for the school, he had the opportunity to take some graduate classes for free. Little did he realize that his casual attitude of just picking classes that looked fun would change the course of his career.

"Honestly, I kind of flipped through the catalogue and said 'Huh that [computer science] class looks interesting, I think I'll do that.' and so I did and it worked out well. As a 50-year-old, I am horrified to look back and think that I left that to chance," said Dr. DeClue.

Even though at the time it seemed like a flippant decision, Dr. DeClue has discovered how much his music background really did prepare him for computer science:

"Musicians tend to be very creative and software developers are very creative. You get the same kick out of writing a piece of software that you get out of … writing a song. It's a very creative work that you do, so there are a lot of things that musicians can connect with."

> *WE WANT TO SERVE OTHERS BY WRITING THE BEST SOFTWARE AND BY BEING THE BEST SOFTWARE ENGINEERS THAT WE CAN BE.*
>
> *-Dr.DeClue*

He is also involved with SBU's competitive programmers. This year, the team placed second at the Consortium for Computing Sciences Midwest Region Programming Contest Sept. 25 at Franklin College in Franklin, Ind.

The team also competed at the IBM-sponsored International Collegiate Programming Contest (also called the "Battle of the Brains") in November, ranking 24th and placing within the top three schools from Missouri.

Dr. DeClue enjoys being involved in the team because it allows him to practice other aspects of teaching.

"Much of teaching is coaching and motivating," said Dr. DeClue. "I would consider those a couple of things I do well."

Dr. DeClue uses his teaching position as an opportunity to show the importance of ethics in computer science information. Because technology is rapidly changing, he said, laws do not necessarily keep up. As a result, ethics is sometimes all that programmers have as guiding principles.

"I think the argument is even stronger for a computer science software engineer to have a very thorough grounding in their faith and in the ethical practice of their faith in what they do," said Dr. DeClue. "We find ourselves as computer scientists frequently doing things

for which there are no written laws for right and wrong. So where does that right and wrong come from? How do we know what is ethical and not ethical? That is where our faith can give us great guidance."

In addition to emphasizing ethics in the area of computer science, Dr. DeClue helps students see how their field can be used to help advance the Gospel. Seniors in the department are required to do a senior project. Last year, the seniors created software for the Salvation Army.

"We see great opportunity to integrate faith [with computer science]," said Dr. DeClue. "We could have built a client management system for any one, but we chose The Salvation Army because their missions is similar to our mission. We want them to be effective in their mission of reaching people for Christ and serving people."

Dr.DeClue emphasizes to his students that no matter what project they are working on, they are to do their best and pick a project that will be serving the Lord.

"You must seek out ways to be what God wants you to be, then you must seek out ways to be the absolute best at that," said Dr.DeClue. "So if you are the best, you are showing leadership and if you're doing what God wants you to do, you're being a servant."

He then explained how as software engineers his students can achieve being servants by being the best at what they do:

"We want to serve others by writing the best software and by being the best software engineers that we can be," said Dr.DeClue. "I want to be the best teacher that I can be; I want to make myself available. I want to serve my students in that way. I want to provide the best software engineers to organizations that I can. I want to serve the organization, and I want to serve their [the organization's] clientele."

While music is not his career, Dr.DeClue has not completely abandoned his love for music. He plays in a band with Duck Creek Technologies founder, Doug Roller '76, and SBU alumni David Hacker '73. Dr.DeClue also plays and organizes the music for First Baptist Church's Wednesday night Esquire Ministry.

Even though Dr. DeClue may have ended up in computer science because of a whim while in his twenties, he has made his career about serving his students and helping them achieve their best.

Dr. DeClue received his Bachelor of Science in education in 1982 and a Master of Science in school computer studies in 1985 from Northwest Missouri State University, and a Ph.D. in instructional technology from Southern Illinois University in 1996.

He is married to Gina and they have three children: Ty, a senior graphic design major at SBU; Tarah, a junior math education major at SBU; and Tori a senior at Bolivar High School.

Dr. DeClue is an active member at First Baptist Church in Bolivar and plays in the worship band for the Wednesday night Esquire Ministry.

Dr. Kevin Hopkins

While many teachers take a break during the summer, Professor and Chair of the SBU Mathematics Department Dr. Kevin Hopkins has discovered a fun way to keep young students interested in learning.

Dr. Hopkins began hosting Math Contest Camp in the summer of 2006. Campers are only required to "like math and be willing to look at hard math problems."

"I never set out to run a camp," said Dr. Hopkins. "But God has just opened doors and it seems to work."

The response has been tremendous from students in grades 5-12. Over the 5 years of the summer camp, 176 campers have attended. For the last three years, Dr. Hopkins has offered two weeks of camp in order to accommodate

the number of students interested.

Dr. Hopkins uses the camps not only to teach math to young students, but also to teach life lessons.

He uses an "easy" button to illustrate that in math contests, there is no "easy" button to make the problems simple. The problems are difficult. He then transitions to show the students that life's problems are hard as well, but God sent Jesus to solve the problem of sin's eternal consequences for us.

Dr. Hopkins also uses juggling to teach life lessons to the students. As he juggles, he explains to the students that juggling is following a predictable pattern of operations. Once those operations are learned, juggling can go on indefinitely. However, juggling indefinitely never occurs.

Dr. Hopkins explains that juggling ceases when known operations are not followed flawlessly every time. The problem is not with understanding what should be done, but in actually doing it. Dr. Hopkins then uses this principle to teach the students a lesson applicable outside of math.

"Similarly in life, my problem is not in knowing what I should do, but in actually doing what I know I should do," said Dr. Hopkins. "Again, God knew we would have that problem, which is why He sent Jesus."

However, it is not just the children that are excited about the summer math camps.

"Parents are thankful for the opportunities of the summer math camps because there are not many like that for kids to go for a week and study what they're interested in," said Dr. Hopkins.

As a father of two children, Dr. Hopkins understands the importance of having opportunities for young learners. In addition to having summer math camps, Hopkins also hosts several math contests during the school year.

When his daughter was in middle school she was working toward competing in contest and found out the night before the competition she couldn't go because only five students were allowed to go, and she was number six.

"There needs to be an opportunity [for students] so that if you're willing to do the extra work and put in the time, you get to do a contest," said Dr. Hopkins.

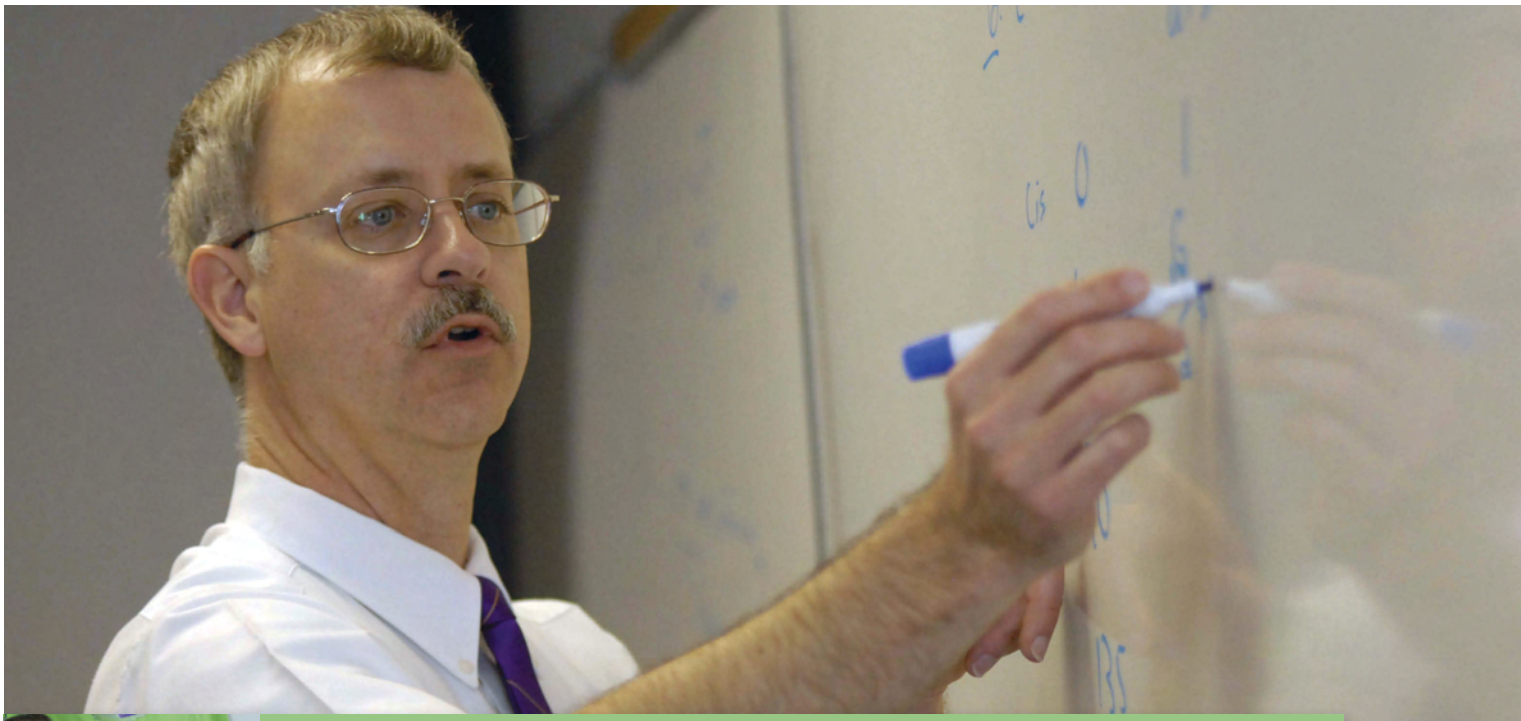
Dr. Hopkins held the first math contest in 2001. Since then, over 6,500 students have come onto the SBU campus for an opportunity to compete. Dr. Hopkins designs the contests so that there is not a limit to the number of students a team can bring. This allows any students to participate if they want to.

"Everyone who has been working on it [competing] can come and not find out the night before they can't come," said Dr. Hopkins.

Dr. Hopkins joined the SBU family in January of 1989.

Dr. Hopkins gives students opportunities to learn by teaching a variety of classes which includes: calculus, linear and abstract algebra, and math technologies. In addition to teaching, he also oversees departmental responsibilities like class scheduling and changes within the department.

"This is my first real job," joked Dr. Hopkins since SBU was the first place he worked at after finishing is education.



Dr. Hopkins received his Bachelor of Arts in mathematics and physics from Greenville College in 1983, a Master of Science in 1986 and a Ph.D. in 1989 in mathematics from the University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign.

He and his wife Lori will be celebrating their 25th anniversary in January 2011. They have two children. Megan is a sophomore at Oklahoma Baptist University and Eric is a senior at Bolivar High School.

Dr. Hopkins is an active member at First Baptist Church in Bolivar. He is the secretary of the deacons. He sings in the adult church choir, he helps with the youth handbells, and plays in the adult handbells.

Dr. Hopkins received the Faculty Life Beautiful Award in December 2006.