Jacob Imola
Jan Hoffmann Letter

     I was in Jan Hoffmann's classes for the Fall and Spring semesters from 2016-2017. Furthermore, I have had a few meetings with him outside of class as I was doing research in programming languages during the spring semester. I found Jan to be a very good teacher and role model during my interactions with him last year.

     I took Introduction to Compiler Design and Foundations of Programming Languages with Jan, two very difficult classes. Fortunately, Jan made them more manageable and more fun. From his lectures, I could easily see Jan's mastery of programming languages from the comfortable, fluid pace of his teaching and the way he eagerly answered questions. During class, he would also say things like "if you'd like to learn more...", encouraging all his students to come to office hours or just talk to him about research. I attended his office hours about 6 times in total. During these sessions, Jan would help other students and me patiently and affably. He cared about how we were doing in his class and was constantly trying to improve it, asking us questions like "what would you like for me to cover next?" and "what did you think of the past unit?". I felt a lot better about the classes at his office hours, and it was fun to talk to Jan afterward about our personal interests. Later on in the year, I signed up for research in programming languages largely because I found Jan's classes to be enjoyable. While he is not my research advisor, our lines of work are similar, so we have had a few discussions about our work. He is always willing to talk about research and has given me good insight. He is very knowledgeable of the current state of programming language research which is evident from the vast number of papers he suggested to me and the ways he connected their results. Importantly, I've gained more motivation to do research because of the confidence he has that I will succeed.

     Jan has given me lots of encouragement and advice as I've traveled into the field of programming languages. I fully believe in his ability to continue teaching and doing research with students like me in the future.