Christopher MacLellan receives 2010 Tobin Award

April 23, 2010

At the Spitaleri/Tobin Award luncheon today, Christopher MacLellan was announced as the recipient of the 2010 Tobin Memorial Award, recognizing the top graduating male at UW. Chris will receive bachelor degrees in computer science and math at commencement ceremonies in May.

As part of their senior design project, Computer Science seniors Melissa Wiederrecht and Christopher MacLellan embedded Beginning Student Language (BSL) into the theorem prover ACL2. BSL is the first in the progressive family of languages in the “How to Design Programs” philosophy, which uses the DrScheme environment to teach high school and college students how to write software. Wiederrecht and MacLellan implemented an interpreter for BSL in ACL2 and showed how ACL2 can be used to reason mechanically about programs written in BSL. This project is part of a broader collaboration between the University of Wyoming, Northeastern University, and the University of Oklahoma, which aims to develop fully automated tools to reason about beginning programs in BSL, thus teaching beginning programmers how to think about their programs at a higher level. Wiederrecht and MacLellan will be presenting their work at the Eleventh Symposium on Trends in Functional Programming (TFP2010) this May in Oklahoma City.