Dear members of the BCGEU SSPD Fund Committee,

I, Matt Daalder, am currently the lab assistant for the Faculty of Medicine, Southern Medical Program. This role requires me to teach anatomy to the faculty’s students, among other duties. While the world is becoming more reliant on technology, anatomy and medical education are fields that are benefitting increasingly from programming skills. Therefore, I believe the course “Introduction to Computational Thinking and Data Science” is important for my career progression as an educator in anatomy and medicine. Having sound knowledge in programming is useful in creating digital anatomical models, interactive atlases, videos for teaching and research, in enhancing medical imaging for clinical purposes, and in creating 3D physical models from imaging for use in education and physician training. With medical programs worldwide relying more heavily on computer science to create digital interactive materials, I believe the skills and knowledge gained from this course in computer science and programming would be of benefit to my career.

Examples of the usefulness of computer science in anatomical education are evident at UBC. Dr. Claudia Krebs (an anatomy instructor) in Vancouver is working with a team to create a 3D virtual, interactive brain to help students learn neuroanatomy. With advanced programming skills I could eventually help in similar efforts, by being useful in both software production and content design. I believe UBCO also has a new data visualisation room. Programming would be useful in creating educational or research content that could utilise this space. Furthermore, members of the School of Health and Exercise Sciences at UBCO are also working to create 3D printed anatomical models from scans of real anatomy. This process requires some knowledge of programming to create an optimal final result for use in classrooms. These are all examples of projects I would like to be able to contribute further to in the future, and this course is a step to getting there.

While this course has already started, payment to receive an official certificate of completion is not required until May 19th, 2019. Without payment, I cannot access the exams, there is no record of completion of the course, and access to the course materials and all progress is removed after the course is complete. I would benefit from having these materials and the course book for future reference and further career development.