

To: Applications officer, European Space Agency
From: Raymond Francis
Date: 14 December 2006
Re: Application for Young Graduate Trainee Program

Madam or Sir,

I wish to express my interest in the European Space Agency's Young Graduate Trainee program. For a young person in my position - a recent graduate in engineering, with a mind as full of the aspirations and idealism of youth as it is with mathematics and science - a training contract with the ESA represents a tremendous and unique chance to learn, and grow, and prepare myself for an exciting career in space technology.

I live in Sudbury, a remote northern city surrounded by Canada's boreal forest. The closest settlement large enough to be called a city is 150 km away, and much of Low Earth Orbit - including the ISS - is closer than the provincial capital. It's a surprising spot for a city; not on any major rivers, far from the Great Lakes, cold and wintry. There's a city here because of a vast mineral deposit; one that exists because of a meteorite impact 1.85 billion years ago. All of the history of this city, its settlement, growth, industrialization, resulting ecological devastation, and the engineered and ongoing recovery of the forest flow from that event. Sudbury is here because of how earth and space and humanity interact, and so am I.

My family, like most here, came because of that ore body. My father and both grandfathers worked in mining, leaving me the first in my family to follow secondary school with a university degree. Having absorbed that knowledge and experience, I find a strong motivation to apply myself to something more than just commercially extracting minerals. I'm looking to devote my efforts to something that increases scientific knowledge or develops new technology, that has positive effects on society and on the planet, and that allows me to continually develop new skills and gain new knowledge. It's idealistic, I know, and I'm surrounded by people who tell me it's impractical and that I should settle down in a steady-salaried job with one of the large mining corporations in town, but in my youthful idealism I still want to think it's possible to go find such an opportunity.

The ESA's Young Graduate Trainee program would be just such a chance. I'd be able to put my strengths into contributing to scientific or technical projects of value while at the same time learning to work in a professional and technical organization, and developing the skills and knowledge my projects would require. At the same time, living away from home in a new country and in an international work setting would allow me to grow a great deal just from the immersion. I'd develop a broader cultural understanding, and also have a chance to expand my language skills. Once the traineeship is completed, the skills and experience gained would serve me well in future employment, and help me to seek further development in work, or in education at the Masters' level or beyond.

For a new graduate looking to choose a path forward, such an ESA traineeship is an exciting and singular opportunity to do good work, to learn and improve myself in a comprehensive way, and to prepare myself for a career in space technology. And it's a chance to do what I can't easily do here - to move beyond simply exploiting the fruits of our interaction with the greater universe, and to begin actually taking a role in understanding it.

The future of cities like mine depend on humanity learning to better use the

earth's resources, which scientific research and earth observation can help us to do. The future of countries and societies like mine depend on learning to better understand the climate and ecology of the Earth, the answers to which also lie, in large part, with space science. And the development and long-term well-being of humanity as a whole rests with a fuller understanding of the place we and our planet hold in the cosmos.

I want to be part of building that understanding. Someday I want to have contributed in a valuable way to the exploration of that universe, or to our knowledge and resulting care of our home planet. Participation in the ESA's Young Graduate Trainee program would be a great first step in that direction.

In line with my previous experience and my level of education, my three choices for positions are listed here:

1. ESA/YG-ESTEC(2006)016 Development of Microgravity Payloads
2. ESA/YG-ESTEC(2006)044 Systems Engineering (Near Earth Asteroids, Opportunities & Risks) - Advanced Concepts & Studies
3. ESA/YG-ESOC(2006)009 Spacecraft Operations

Thank you for the opportunity to apply. I look hopefully forward to further communication between us.

Raymond Francis

Sudbury, Canada

telephone:
email:
post: