

Julie O'Brien

Sustainability Director

Why did you decide to join Air Products?

I wasn't sure if I wanted to pursue a manufacturing or technical career when I was graduating. Air Products' Career Development Program gave me the opportunity to try different jobs.

Why do you love working at Air Products? What is it that keeps you working at Air Products?

The people of Air Products, and the work I'm doing. Our employees are so sharp, committed and they really care for each other. Plus, the work I'm doing is challenging, and I feel like I'm making a contribution to the long-term success of the company.

Please describe your career with Air Products to date.

In 31 years at Air Products, I have worked in Manufacturing, Process Engineering, Environmental Process Engineering, EH&S, Public Relations, Product Safety, Sustainability and Business Compliance. My efforts in sustainability include integrating sustainability into company businesses and working closely with senior leaders to develop and achieve the company's sustainability strategy.

How does what you do contribute to sustainability?

As Air Products Sustainability Director, I created our GROW – CONSERVE – CARE sustainability framework and have had great opportunities to contribute in all three areas. Some of my most significant contributions include helping develop and drive our sustainability strategy, which includes making products that benefit the environment and helping our customers be more efficient and sustainable while also building a culture where all employee can fully contribute. I have also helped the company meet its environmental goals, develop our new 2020 sustainability goals, and publicly share our progress in sustainability.

What is the most intriguing/satisfying thing you've been involved in since you've been at Air Products?

Early in my career, I designed equipment for a production line that substantially reduced our water consumption at a large facility in Texas. This project was what first interested me in environmental sustainability. Later I helped create the processes for assessing our environmental and product safety risks, which helped us reduce our environmental impact and enable our customers to safely use our products.

More recently, I helped the company reach its 2015 sustainability goals, which improved

energy efficiency, reduced water consumption and lowered emissions. Achieving these goals also saved the company \$700 million. After that success, we set new goals for 2020 that include environmental and economic and social goals.

What career advice would you give to those just starting out in their engineering/IT careers?

The world is constantly changing. Technology is developing at an ever-increasing pace, and its impacts, both positive and negative, are significant. We all need to keep up with these changes through continual learning and applying the problem-solving skills we develop as engineers. Plus, with these changes, what we do and how we work will evolve. Careers will change dramatically over time—staying flexible and open to new opportunities will lead to exciting jobs where you can make a difference.