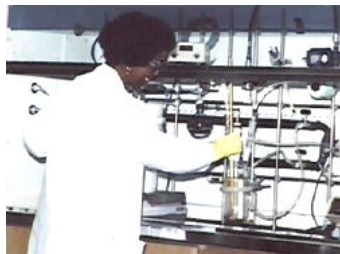




Sloan Career Cornerstone Center

Profiles of Chemists



Martha Straughter

**Senior Process Technician
Novartis Corporation
Baton Rouge, LA**

Education:

Associate Business Degree, Delta Junior College (Baton Rouge, LA)

Job Description:

Senior Process Technician in Research and Development

Advice to Students:

"The more versatile you are, the more valuable you become."

Interview:

"I worked for three years as an analytical technician, and four years as a process operator. I have now been a chemical process technician for eleven years and I've really found my niche," says Martha Straughter, a senior process technician at Novartis Corporation.

Working in process chemistry means developing and improving the processes by which products are made. Improving a process may involve reducing the number of process steps while making sure that overall yields remain as good or get better than in the original process. "In the process lab, we use a lot of fractionation and distillation equipment, gas chromatography, and HPLC," says Straughter. "As we develop the process, it's my job to pull samples at intervals and test them to see if we are making the product we want to be making."

Straughter also has responsibility for the stock area for her group (site). "I make sure that everything runs correctly," she says. "I have responsibility for 3,375 different chemicals and reagents and their proper handling and disposal. It's unusual for a R&D technician to have so much responsibility," she says "but I've been with the company for a long time and I've demonstrated the ability to handle multiple tasks," she says. "When you are a chemical technician, the scientists see you as a valuable resource," she explains. "The more versatile you are, the more valuable you become."

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Prepared as part of the Sloan Career Cornerstone Center (www.careercornerstone.org)

Source: "Careers for Chemists" © American Chemical Society