

## MARY JOHN O'HAIR

**Mary John O'Hair** is Vice Provost for School and Community Partnerships and Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Oklahoma. She is founding director of OU's K20 Center for Educational and Community Renewal (K20 Center), a statewide, interdisciplinary research and development center that connects the University with over 500 schools and communities across Oklahoma. Dr. O'Hair has focused on developing research partnerships that address the ability of all students to grow as learners and human beings. As PI of over \$40 million in funded research projects, Dr. O'Hair has focused on leadership development; diversity and equity; organizational learning and systemic change; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education; economic development (i.e. K-12 biotechnology schools); global education, and technology integration and virtual learning (i.e. digital game-based learning). The K20 Center has received funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, National Science Foundation, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, U.S. Department of Education, and several state and local foundations and trusts. Ranking fourth university-wide in Center Rankings for External Funding FY 2008, the K20 Center supports cutting-edge research that meets the practical application of new ideas and innovation to enhance Oklahoma's knowledge base, economy and well-being. To date, the K20 Center has impacted over 500 schools and districts in Oklahoma serving over 50,000 students. In addition to statewide partnerships, Dr. O'Hair was founding director of the International Networks for Democratic Education consisting of school-university networks in China, Finland, France, Mexico, South Africa, Thailand, UK, and The Netherlands.

Just as school-university partnerships accelerate the change process, interdisciplinary college and university partnerships foster learning by providing a safe environment that encourages innovation as well as critical and supportive feedback. One example of a university partnership that Dr. O'Hair helped to establish is an Interdisciplinary Master of Arts in Educational and Community Renewal between University of Pretoria, South Africa, and OU's K20 Center and Graduate College. The degree focuses on preparing citizens for a democracy and highlights successful ways to better meet the needs of children and families through interactive, action-oriented partnerships among business and industry, schools, families, universities, community organizations and governmental agencies. Faculty from architecture, communication, education, political science, engineering, meteorology, and health sciences teach in the program.

Dr. O'Hair has worked extensively with several college and university partnerships focused on issues of diversity and equity including the American Indian Leadership in School Administration (AILSAs) cohort which attracts culturally diverse students from across the nation; NSF grants that focus on recruiting minorities and women into science and engineering; and mentoring minority women faculty and graduate students.

In Dr. O'Hair's current position, she is responsible for a complex organization consisting of multiple research professors, research associates, faculty fellows, graduate and undergraduate students along with 50 school-based learning coaches; managing a budget of over \$6 million per year; and a 40-member board of advisors consisting of OU's vice presidents for research, development, technology development, and governmental relations; college deans; the First Lady of Oklahoma; CEOs; foundation presidents; professional education associations (i.e. teachers, administrators, school boards); and practicing teachers, counselors, principals, and superintendents.