Title:
Museum as Catalyst: Facilitating Creative Interdisciplinary Collaboration across Northwestern

Abstract:
This presentation will review the multidisciplinary collaborations developed around a recent exhibition project, “Paint the Eyes Softer: Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt” on view at the Block Museum through April 22. A case study will be provided that illustrates how centers and units can facilitate work across schools and foster capacity for bold thinking and innovation. Participants will learn how the Block Museum convened student research and faculty expertise from across the University—including contributions from classics, art history, sound arts, materials science, computer science, medicine, archaeology, and art history—to investigate an ancient Roman-Egyptian mummy “discovered” on Northwestern’s campus. The project included, for example, a CT scan of the mummy at Northwestern Memorial Hospital as well as an experiment at Argonne National Laboratory, both requiring wide-ranging organizational collaborations, starting with scientific research in materials sciences and branching out to the humanities, relying on crucial support from both Risk Management and Global Marketing. Robust teaching and learning opportunities behind-the-scenes resulted in a rich public exhibition reflecting the diversity of Northwestern’s endeavors, and tells the multifaceted story of these objects through collaborative perspectives.

Learning Outcomes:
1. Recognize opportunities for fostering collaborations, and the need to re-allocate resources when an unexpected opportunity arises.
2. Utilize student research and input creatively.
3. Document your achievements and utilize campus resources to effectively tell your story.