

DFI August Faculty Newsletter!

Fall is just around the corner! This newsletter offers practical guidance for a seamless course start-up, including the latest Canvas features. We also have the information for you to sign up for our Fall 2026 virtual Faculty retreat happening on Tuesday, August 11.

Happy reading!

What's New?

1. Support for your Fall 2026 Courses:

Individual assistance from DFI:

- If you would like assistance setting up your Canvas course please [fill out our Canvas course support form](#) and one of our Instructional Support Associates (ISAs) will contact you to assist.
- We can assist with:**
 - Importing content from last fall
 - Any questions you may have about setting up your Canvas course
 - [Utilizing one of the TC templates](#)

Do-it-yourself:

- This simple [10-step Canvas Quickstart guide](#) is a great resource for faculty who would like to set up Canvas courses on their own.

2. Fall 2026 Virtual Faculty Retreat

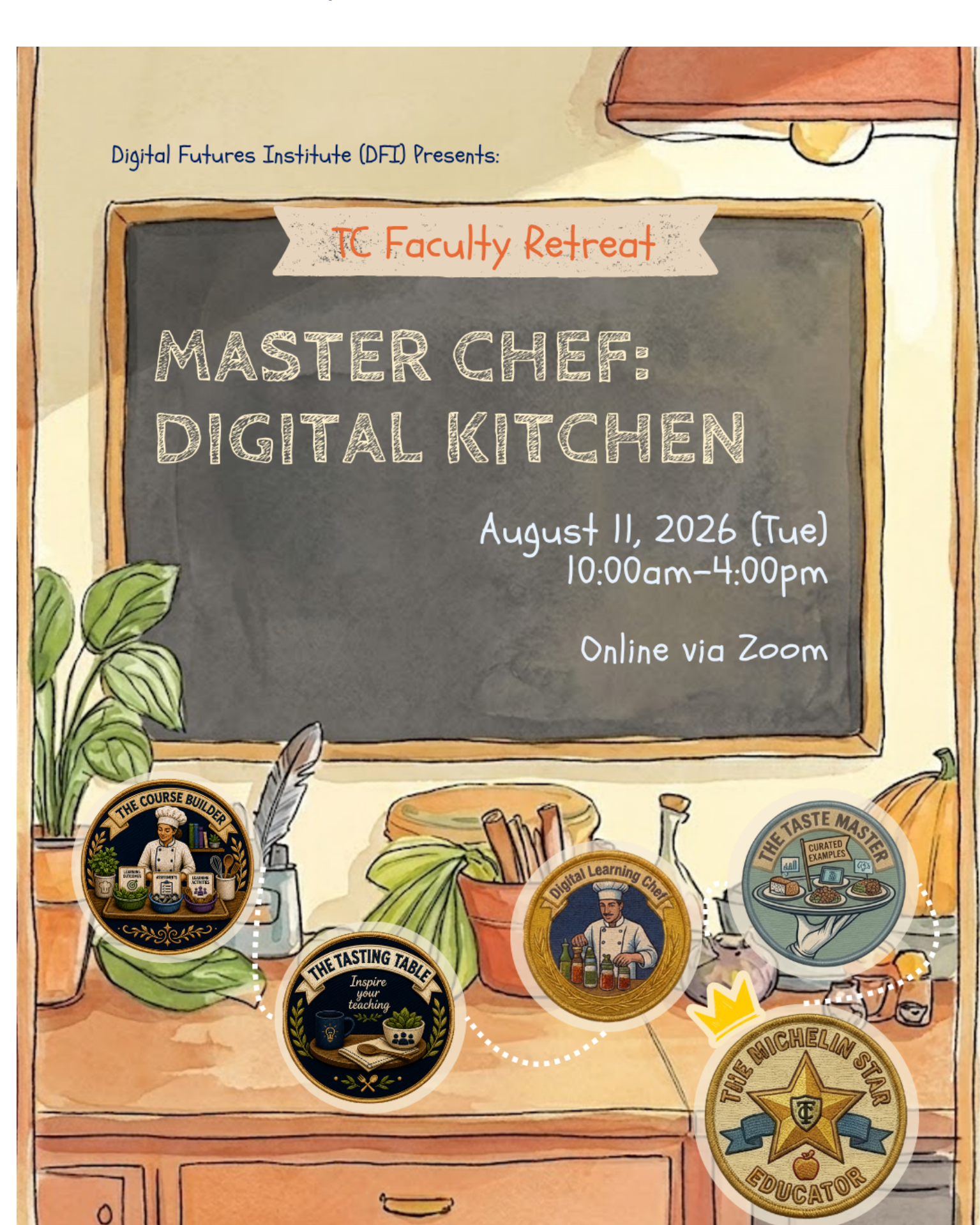
Digital Futures Institute (DFI) Presents:

TC Faculty Retreat

MASTER CHEF:
DIGITAL KITCHEN

August 11, 2026 (Tue)
10:00am-4:00pm

Online via Zoom



This year's virtual TC Faculty Retreat is a dedicated space to collaborate, share innovative teaching practices, and prepare your courses for the upcoming semester. This day-long event focuses on practical, actionable strategies to enhance student engagement and integrate interactive learning tools. Throughout the day, we will cover four key areas:

- Effective Course Design:** Walk through the essentials of backward design, align learning objectives with assessments, and explore practical AI strategies for your teaching.
- Faculty Innovation Showcase:** Connect with colleagues to see how they are using innovative tools and approaches to elevate student learning in their own online courses.
- Digital Learning:** Discover simple, actionable techniques to build community, encourage learner autonomy, and support student success in digital environments.
- Interactive E-Learning Tools:** See how authoring tools can transform static content into active, dynamic experiences.

Whether you are refreshing an existing syllabus or building a new course from scratch, you will leave with concrete tools and fresh ideas to elevate your teaching practice.

[View the Agenda for the Day!](#)

[Register Now](#)

Who's Who at DFI

This month, we are spotlighting our **Instructional Support Associate, Michelle Santamaria**.

Check out Michelle's answers below to learn more about her and the incredible work she does to support our community year-round.



How long have you been at TC and DFI? What brought you here?

I've been at TC for three years now. I've always been curious about how higher education and the digital future can come together. A friend of mine who worked at TC passed along the job opening, and given my background in administration, it felt like the perfect opportunity to grow, learn, and connect with others. Since joining, I've been constantly inspired by my amazing colleagues who challenge me to think outside the box. I truly admire the passion and dedication everyone brings to their work here at TC and DFI.

What is your main focus or area of expertise at DFI, and what is one project you're currently working on that you're really energized about?

My main focus at DFI is technical support for Canvas. Right now, I'm collaborating with a few professors on their courses, and it always brings a smile to my face seeing how impactful our support is for them! I love introducing faculty to all the services we offer at TC so their classes can be as engaging as possible.

How can faculty best collaborate with you, or what is one DFI resource you wish more people knew about?

The best way to collaborate with me is by reaching out early in the semester so we can work together on your course planning.

As for a resource I wish more people knew about: we offer one-on-one appointments! Whether you need help with course design or want step-by-step guides for your Canvas sites, we're here to help you build everything out.

Outside of your work at DFI, what is a hobby, book, or personal pursuit keeping you inspired lately?

Outside of DFI, I'm at my happiest when I'm outdoors—whether that's grilling on a portable grill, playing sports, or relaxing at the beach during the summer. I also love camping with friends, especially waking up right by the river. Volleyball has always been a huge part of my life; I used to play in a league, though my recent schedule has made it a bit trickier to keep up with.

What truly drives me, though, is my family. As the eldest daughter, I've always felt a deep sense of purpose and motivation. While I initially pursued general business in my undergrad, transferring to John Jay opened my eyes to forensic accounting—and I immediately knew I had found my true path in accountancy.



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