MSU engineering students present Detroit Semester lessons

Michigan State University’s love affair with Detroit was all dressed up and on display during final presentations of Detroit Semester on Aug. 1.

More than 50 students from the MSU College of Engineering showed off in real time their love for and lessons from the Motor City at Detroit’s Eastern Market Shed #3, 2934 Russell St.

One of the student presenters was Valbona Vulaj, a senior electrical engineering major from Troy and a second-year intern at Fiat Chrysler Automobiles.

She said Detroit Semester offers a different mindset on Detroit and what it has to offer.

“Detroit Semester for me is just another reason to stay in the Detroit area after school,” she said. “It has given me so much exposure to Detroit’s opportunities, not just in the work force but social as well. It is always fun going to Detroit because something is always changing, new things are being built, small companies are coming in, and there is just so much expansion and new development moving in. It is truly exciting for anyone who wants to live in this area.”
“Detroit Semester helped us be truly passionate about the work we’re doing in engineering, and especially the work we accomplished this summer,” she added. “It is really an honor to have so many engineering opportunities for students here in the Detroit area.”

Kyle Liechty, co-op/internship coordinator in the MSU Center for Spartan Engineering, said each 10-minute Detroit Semester presentation offered a student view of the “hottest ticket for engineering” in the next decade.

“The Detroit Semester has connected nearly 60 students from the MSU College of Engineering with engagement opportunities around the city all summer long,” Liechty said. “It’s essential that students go beyond their co-op facility to connect with where they are living. It’s about creating a true appreciation of the region.”

Detroit Semester is a one-credit co-op course offered to engineering students who are working in Southeast Michigan from May through August. Students enroll in the EGR 393 Cooperative Engineering Education course and participate in discussion groups, networking, and about a dozen discovery events — everything from dinners with executives to a party by the Detroit River to a look at Detroit lofts. Topics included mobility in the tech world and urban planning, and even volunteer shifts on the Detroit Mower Gang.

Liechty said this year’s 60 students represent 30 companies from Monroe to Orion Charter Township. Ages ranged from freshmen to “victory lap” seniors.

“If we can show students the kind of life offered in Detroit, they are more likely to accept jobs and stay in Detroit after graduation,” he added.
Related Website: Center For Spartan Engineering: Careers
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