The Student Planning Organization/SPO expanded their repertoire of road trips to Detroit for two nights and an action-packed 1-1/2 days in October. With a rental van, an Airbnb, and a busy itinerary, fourteen students enjoyed a great urban planning adventure. Their first stop was at Capuchin Soup Kitchen’s Earthworks Urban Farm. Earthworks provides numerous programs that address youth and adult education in nutrition, food justice, and growing one’s own food, through classes, community potlucks, and volunteer days. Their next stop was the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, a non-profit focused on making business success in Detroit possible. Next stop: the John Portman-designed Renaissance Center and the offices of the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, with lunch on the riverfront. According to SPO organizer Liz Bastian, “In between stops, we made time to walk along the river walk, explore the Guardian and Fisher Buildings, and even drive by the Heidelberg Project.” Afternoon stops included The Greening of Detroit and Detroit Future City, before Smithgroup JJR, one of the largest architecture, engineering and planning firms in the country. The group met up with David Mischiu, BAUP ’14, and toured his neighborhood, Hamtramck, with him.

The half day on Saturday was open to explore the city, visit museums or the Eastern Market, and more. “As a native Detroiter, I had a great time showing fellow students around the different parts of the city. Seeing how much everyone was truly enjoying themselves, and how engaged they were at all our visits, made the trip more than worth it,” said Liz Bastian.

The SPO hopes that the Detroit trip will become an annual event, like their spring professional development trips which have taken them to St. Louis, Chicago, Indianapolis, and more.