

## The more you know about Detroit...

WSU institute wants people to learn about, experience the "D"

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Wayne State's Detroit Orientation Institute plans to let attendees better understand the city with its "One Day in the D" at its session scheduled for April 12.

The session, titled "Understand Detroit: Past, Present and Future," will give participants a broad view of Detroit's contemporary environment and highlight city assets including arts, culture and entertainment.

DOI Director Ann Slawnik regards the session as a "short but informative" way of helping participants understand issues surrounding the metro area.

"The DOI is designed to provide media, business, nonprofit and other professionals who are new to metropolitan Detroit — and others who want to know more about the area — with a candid understanding of the issues, personalities and events affecting the region," Slawnik said.

The DOI normally organizes three-day sessions but decided to hold a condensed one-day session for April. The tuition is \$250 per person, which includes transportation, meals and background materials. Holding a one-day session was an economic consideration, Slawnick said.

"We realize that in this economic environment, some people can't afford the three-day session," Slawnik said. "This alternative will still give participants a vast amount of information at a lower cost."

The DOI is partnering with the nonprofit organization Inside Detroit, which will give a tour of select areas of the city during the session. A grassroots organization founded in 2005, Inside Detroit aims to promote the city by educating people about it. Co-founder Jeanette Pierce said she's always excited to give out what she calls her "wow facts" when holding tours of the city.

“There’s so much that people just don’t know about the city when they come here,” Pierce said.

“Things like the fact that Martin Luther King Jr. gave the first version of his ‘I Have a Dream’ speech here or that the Renaissance Center is the tallest hotel in North America or that downtown Detroit’s crime rate is 37 percent below the national average — things like that really make people say, ‘Wow.’”

As organizations hoping to promote the city, the recently released 2010 census numbers were less than welcome news for the DOI and Inside Detroit.

The census showed that during the past decade, Detroit lost 25 percent of its population. With just more than 713,000 residents, Detroit has dropped to the 18th largest city in the country. But according to Slawnik and Pierce, a smaller Detroit isn’t a major problem.

“The census shouldn’t have been a surprise to anyone,” Slawnik said.

“Detroit’s population shift has been fairly obvious. But there are plenty of vibrant American cities that are smaller than Detroit and still doing well. We can still be a great city of 700,000 people.”

The census also brought some good news for the city, Pierce said.

“Detroit’s 18-to-34-year-old population holding a four-year degree increased by 59 percent,” Pierce said. “That’s a really good demographic. Cities like Seattle, Miami and Boston are all smaller than Detroit. Smaller doesn’t have to mean bad.”

If the DOI’s upcoming session sounds somewhat like another popular WSU program, it’s not a coincidence.

“We also plan Wayne State’s Alternative Spring Break, which is aimed at students,” Slawnik said. “The April session isn’t targeted toward students. It’s primarily designed for professionals who are looking to move and do business in the city.”

DOI will host its traditional three-day session in October.