Students at the University of Minnesota Duluth will be able to start earning a new degree this fall for a major in cultural entrepreneurship, a program university officials say is the first of its kind in the country.

Students who graduate with the major would be able to go into marketing or international affairs, or do things like manage events, art galleries and museums or create businesses that sell products around the world or in town. The program, housed in the College of Liberal Arts, will require students to study two foreign languages and take business courses, among others, and encourage them to take internships and study abroad.

It’s suited for students to compete globally and on a local level in creative entrepreneurial careers, said Susan Maher, dean of the college.

“When I hear our mayor talk about where Duluth is going, he wants a town of cultural entrepreneurs,” she said. “It will keep Duluth cutting-edge, and it will keep Duluth growing. We are hoping this major will help train people and keep more UMD students here.”

At its heart, Maher said, the program will build creative talent and language skills. Without any recruitment, more than 30 students have enrolled in the first-semester course.

Its founding director, Olaf Kuhlke, and its director, Mike Mullins, are in Germany studying the cultural entrepreneurship program at the University of Passau. The university has had the program for 20 years and 10 percent of its students are enrolled, Kuhlke said. Such a program is very popular internationally, he said.

The two-language requirement — with choices including French, Russian, Spanish, Ojibwe, German and Mandarin — is important, said Mullins, who also is an instructor of German studies at UMD.

Those, for example, who want to sell a product globally need to navigate in multiple languages, he said, and understand the culture, too.

“Students need to be able to go out and meet people in other cultures on those people’s terms,” he said. “One part of that is having an appreciation and empathy for people who think differently than we do about things. And engage them using their view of the world.”

Students will have enough language credits to easily minor or double-major in one, Kuhlke said. The major also opens a niche for students to take entrepreneur courses that before were only available to business majors, he said.

Locally, the program would help graduates take advantage of things such as Duluth’s booming craft-beer scene, or the possibility of it becoming a mountain-biking or surfing hub, Maher said.

“It’s about leveraging the environment and regional assets of a place,” she said.

At the Global Center for Cultural Entrepreneurship in Santa Fe, N.M., work is done with American Indian communities to build sustainable businesses for artists and jewelry makers, for example. UMD studied what is being done there because “it gives a model of some artists’ cooperatives and organizations that could be built here in the Arrowhead,” Maher said, “with so many different bands and Dakota tribes.”

The new program, she said, woven in with UMD’s American Indian programs, could help strengthen existing marketing networks.

“I don’t know when UMD has tried something entirely new,” said Kuhlke, who also is associate dean for the College of Liberal Arts. “That’s part of the excitement about it.”