New program aims to produce global scholars

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“The world is flat,” proclaimed *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman in the title of his 2005 best-seller on how technology is leveling the global playing field, but that newly level playing field brings with it a new set of problems.



Myke Yest, left, and Casey Love are co-directors of the new Altman International Studies Program.

This fall, Tulane University launched a new interdisciplinary program aimed at preparing students to take on the unique challenges of an increasingly interconnected world.

The Jeffrey A. Altman International Studies Program in Business and Liberal Arts is a four-year undergraduate program that combines advanced language training with business and liberal arts education. Made possible through an $8.3 million gift from the Jeffrey A. Altman Foundation, the philanthropic organization founded by Altman (BSM ’88), the program targets a select number of students who seek a more integrated understanding of the economic, political and social issues that define the contemporary world.

“It’s an incredible opportunity for students to gain technical business savvy and also the global thinking that comes with a liberal arts degree,” says Myke Yest, professor

of practice at the Freeman School, who co-directs the program with Casey Love, senior professor of practice in political science.

Students completing the program will earn both a Bachelor of Science in Management and a Bachelor of Arts in a chosen liberal arts discipline, such as political economy, economics or history, but according to Yest, the program is more than simply a dual-degree offering. Each semester the Altman Scholars will take one course as a group, enabling the students to pull together their experiences in business and liberal arts as they explore global issues.

“Our goal is to make sure that the two areas reinforce each other and are being intertwined throughout the program,” says Yest. “It’s the meshing of these worlds and the constant reflection of one back to the other that’s going to lead to a more robust experience.”

The Altman Scholars will also devote at least two years to foreign language study and spend their junior year abroad in a foreign-language-speaking country. This summer, they’ll get their first taste of international travel with a trip to Costa Rica to take part in a month-long program combining service learning with a course in cross-cultural communication and business.

According to Yest, graduates of the program will be qualified for careers in international business, government, the non-profit world and non-governmental organizations.

“Our hope is that after completing the program, Altman Scholars will be able to think in a much more global way,” says Yest. “Not only will they have strong technical proficiency in business, a language and a liberal arts discipline, they’ll have the ability to weave all these areas together and that’s really what this program is all about.”