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Faculty of Management to welcome Barefoot Cellars founders as 2015 Executives in Residence

University of Lethbridge Faculty of Management students stand to benefit from one of the greatest entrepreneurial stories ever told.

Michael Houlihan and Bonnie Harvey co-founded Barefoot Cellars, the #1 wine brand in the world, with little industry knowledge and no capital, building an unknown label into one of the fastest-growing brands in America. From Feb. 2-5, 2015 the couple will be featured as U of L Faculty of Management Executives in Residence, bringing their principles for success to students at both the University's Lethbridge and Calgary campuses.

"We're really excited about the whole opportunity and love what the Faculty of Management is up to, we think it's really fantastic," says Houlihan, who along with Harvey will spend the majority of the week addressing and inspiring students, a role they've excelled at since selling the Barefoot brand to E&J Gallo in 2005.

"So much of what we did and learned was as a result of not having a bankroll behind us," says Harvey from their California offices. "If students are afraid of not having enough knowledge to get into an industry or not having enough money, we're right there to prove to them that you can be extremely successful without either, and they just might turn out to be assets for you."

Since selling their brand, Houlihan and Harvey have consulted Fortune 500s and start-up businesses alike, penned a New York Times bestseller (*The Barefoot Spirit*, currently being used in 30 schools of entrepreneurship), keynote internationally and have spoken to schools of entrepreneurship across the United States. They recently served as keynote speakers for the 2014 SOCAP Symposium (Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals in Business), 2014 World Conference on Entrepreneurship in Dublin, Ireland, and the National C-Suite Conference in Los Angeles.

"The Executive in Residence program was initiated as a means to bring real-world expertise into the classroom and to give our students opportunities to gain knowledge

and insight from those working in key industry positions,” says Dr. Bob Ellis, the U of L’s Dean of the Faculty of Management.

“To be able to bring Michael and Bonnie to our campuses for a week to share their insights is outstanding. They built their brand from the ground up and their example of entrepreneurship, coupled with the social conscience that guides all their business decisions, is uniquely suited to the philosophies of the Faculty.”

Indeed, Houlihan and Harvey pioneered the concept of worthy cause marketing, a brand mainstay that persists today.

“Barefoot became the largest selling brand in the world, not through advertising, but through worthy cause marketing,” says Houlihan. “It’s a term we coined to distinguish it from cause marketing and it’s really about social entrepreneurship and the idea that your brand represents more for your customer than a mercantile product or service. The brand serves a larger charitable or non-profit community giving the customer a social reason to buy your product.”

It was a revolutionary concept that created legions of loyal customers and served community interests across the United States.

“It was a very grassroots approach, and we found out about it not because we were such great tree huggers but because we were broke,” laughs Houlihan. “We didn’t have any money for advertising and as you know, if you advertise, you can’t just advertise once. We wanted an approach that really said what we stood for as an organization.”

Houlihan and Harvey will begin their week with a public presentation on Monday, Feb. 2 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Delta Bow Valley Hotel in Calgary (free registration is available at www.uleth.ca/calgary/UofL-Executives-in-Residence-2015, lunch and a copy of the Barefoot Spirit book included), followed by a student/industry mix and mingle event that evening at the U of L’s Calgary campus.

The couple will then head to the Lethbridge campus for three full days of presentations and seminars. Their week concludes with a keynote address at the Student Professional Development Conference on Thursday, Feb. 5 at the Coast Hotel. Students, U of L alumni and members of the local business community are invited to attend, with registration available at www.uleth.ca/management/The-Barefoot-Story (tickets are \$30 and include dinner and a copy of the Barefoot Spirit book).

“What we would like to achieve is to impart our 30 years of business expertise to these young entrepreneurs who are starting out, so that they don’t have to suffer some of the pain that we did,” says Houlihan.

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About the Barefoot Wine Founders



Michael Houlihan and Bonnie Harvey founded Barefoot Cellars in their laundry room in 1986. Starting with no money and no knowledge of the business, they developed strategic alliances, innovative marketing and an entrepreneurial culture to overcome formidable obstacles in the highly competitive and controlled wine industry. In 2005, they sold Barefoot Wine to E&J Gallo. Barefoot is now the #1 wine brand in the world.

Their New York Times Bestselling business book, *The Barefoot Spirit, How Hardship, Hustle, and Heart Built America's #1 Wine Brand*, chronicles their journey from humble beginnings to nationwide blockbuster. Their new book is the companion entitled, *The Entrepreneurial Spirit, 23 Ways to Engage and Empower Your People*.

Today, they share their insights and experience with students, startups, growth-phase businesses, and corporations through [The Barefoot Spirit](#) and [The Entrepreneurial Culture](#). They have shared their principles with more than 30 schools of entrepreneurship and are sought-after international keynote speakers and corporate trainers. They are regular guests on radio and television, Fox Radio News Network's Workplace Culture Experts and have written hundreds of articles for national and international business and professional publications.