



RODNEY STRONG
V I N E Y A R D S



Wine Business Institute
School of Business and Economics

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RODNEY STRONG VINEYARDS AND THE WINE BUSINESS INSTITUTE AT SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY LAUNCH RODNEY STRONG PATHWAYS PROGRAM

HEALDSBURG, California (December 20, 2016) – [Rodney Strong Vineyards](#) and the [Wine Business Institute \(WBI\) at Sonoma State University \(SSU\)](#) announced today the launch of the Rodney Strong Pathways Program to bring a broad range of talented students to SSU, and provide them with a better educational experience to foster their academic career and life success. This \$250,000 gift will provide critical resources for SSU to develop this co-curricular program, and support the completion for the [Wine Spectator Learning Center](#), a new education and industry hub designed around advanced-technology classrooms, a student commons and gardens, and a collaborative space for faculty and business leaders.

Sonoma State University launched its Education Opportunity Program (EOP) over 40 years ago to recruit students who are the first in their families to attend college, or who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The program supports students through a summer transition experience, academic and career advising, cohort-based classes, and student work experiences.

The Rodney Strong Pathways Program augments existing EOP support services by engaging all EOP Students during each of their years on campus, providing co-curricular training in financial literacy, entrepreneurship, career guidance, and leadership. This program will positively impact more than 600 students each year.

“We are thrilled to partner with Sonoma State University to create the Rodney Strong Pathways Program, which will bridge the gap between these students getting into college and making the transition to having a successful career, and becoming leaders in the community,” states Rodney Strong President Carmen Castaldi. “Starting with the Sonoma County Vintners Fund the Future Program for youth literacy, and our sponsorship of the Luther Burbank Center for the Arts, we view this gift as completing the circle in support of our greater Sonoma County community.”

“Our core values are in service to securing a future for our students. A future where their hard work, passions, and talent not only create success for themselves, but more importantly help them make a difference to others. We’re thrilled to welcome Rodney Strong Vineyards into our family of partners working

to secure opportunities for all students, including support for the future Wine Spectator Learning Center,” Dr. William S. Silver, Dean of the School of Business and Economics said. In recognition of this gift, Rodney Strong Vineyards will become one of only 10 Icon donors, and its name will be included on the permanent art installation at the soon to be completed Wine Spectator Learning Center on the SSU campus.

About Rodney Strong Vineyards

Rodney Strong Vineyards is a family owned company that farms 14 estate vineyards and crafts wines from Sonoma County’s finest appellations – Alexander Valley, Russian River Valley, Chalk Hill, Knights Valley, Dry Creek Valley, and Sonoma Coast. The winery was founded in 1959 by Sonoma County wine pioneer Rodney D. Strong as the 13th bonded winery in the county. It was purchased by the Klein family, a third generation California farming family, in 1989. The company aspires to conserve and protect the environment in all its operations through sustainable practices, solar power, and fish friendly farming.

Rodney Strong Vineyards is located at 11455 Old Redwood Highway, off Highway 101 just south of the town of Healdsburg in Sonoma County. The winery is one hour north of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Learn more at www.RodneyStrong.com

About the Wine Business Institute

The Wine Business Institute (WBI) is an education and research institute of the School of Business and Economics (SBE) at Sonoma State University (SSU). SSU is the first institution of higher learning in the U.S. to offer seminars, certificates, and degree programs focused on the business of wine. It is the first school of business in the world to offer an executive-level wine business degree. In 2017, WBI will open the Wine Spectator Learning Center, a 15,000-square-foot state-of-the-art education complex dedicated to training the next generation of leaders for a dynamic global wine industry. With its unique location, expert faculty, and deep relationships in the world of wine, WBI attracts current and future professionals from California and around the world to experience the wealth of connections among students, alumni, and industry leaders.

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