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AB 718 – Higher Education Labor Market Data Reporting

Summary:

AB 718 will require that the California State University (CSU) and request the University of California (UC) systems to include specific salary and student loan information on admission letters for incoming students beginning in 2026 for the incoming 2027 admission class. By 2030 the CSU and UC must provide students with disaggregated data, allowing for students to see the average salaries and student loan payments for graduates of their field of study across the campuses. This bill aims to provide prospective students with valuable information regarding the potential financial outcomes of their chosen field of study, supporting more informed and financially smart decision-making in their educational journey.

Existing law:

Current law requires the CSUs and requests the UCs to provide aggregated labor market outcome information related to the graduates of their undergraduate programs. This existing framework provides data on labor market trends and graduate outcomes but does not mandate the inclusion of such information in formal communications, such as admission letters. Additionally, the current law does not require individualized data for each campus within the CSU and UC systems.

Issue:

Prospective students and their families often face challenges in making informed decisions about which areas of study to pursue in higher education. This knowledge gap can lead to students pursuing degrees in fields with low

earning potential, potentially exacerbating issues related to student loan debt. Without clear, data-driven guidance, students may not fully understand the long-term financial implications of their academic choices, and face uncertainty for their financial future. Additionally, many other states across the country offer labor market data on easily accessible websites or platforms to provide incoming students of public universities the same information AB XXX would require the CSU and request the UC to do. Some of these states include Indiana, North Carolina, Florida, Virginia, New York, Minnesota, and Michigan.

Solution:

AB 718 addresses these issues by requiring that the California State University (CSU) system and requesting the University of California (UC) to include the average salary and student loan payment of graduated students of specific fields of study in admission letters. By including this information in admission letters, students will have a clearer understanding of the economic opportunities and obligations associated with their field of study. This policy is aimed at helping students align their educational investments with career opportunities that are financially sustainable and lead them to a successful career path.

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