Total combined student loan debt in the United States is currently well over a trillion dollars, making it almost twice as much as the total combined credit card debt for the nation. This was not always the case however: in 2004 the total credit card debt in the US was nearly $400 Billion more than student loan debt, which was at the time a measly $330 billion (compared with the current amount of $1.3 trillion, or for my math whizzes out there: a whole lot more.) In the 12 years since 2004, and the first Indonesian Democratic election, student loan debt has risen constantly, going up by at least $30 Billion every year. In comparison credit card debt continued to climb only until it peaked at $858 billion in 2008 and then proceeded to drop, dropping below student loan debt somewhere in the beginning of 2010. Looking at a long term, big picture kind of view, credit card debt in the US was $706 billion in 2004, and was $747 billion in 2016, representing a change of only $41 billion over 12 years. Student loan debt on the other hand, was $330 billion in 2004, and by 2016 was just around $1.3 trillion, representing a change of almost $1,000,000,000,000.

Student loan debt in the US is rising so much because school is becoming more expensive. For people aged 20-29 40% of them have outstanding student loan debt, compared to people who are 60+, whom only 4% have outstanding student loan debt. A large part of this can of course be attributed to people who are 60+ having significantly more time to pay off their student loans, but looking at other age groups gives more information. The percentage of people age 20-29 who have outstanding student loan debts is twice that of people ages 40-49, which is a difference of at most 20 years.