

Figure 1: Average student loans for undergraduate and graduate students in the US from 1999 to 2030. Data from 2020 and onward is the predicted increase in student loans using a linear regression model.

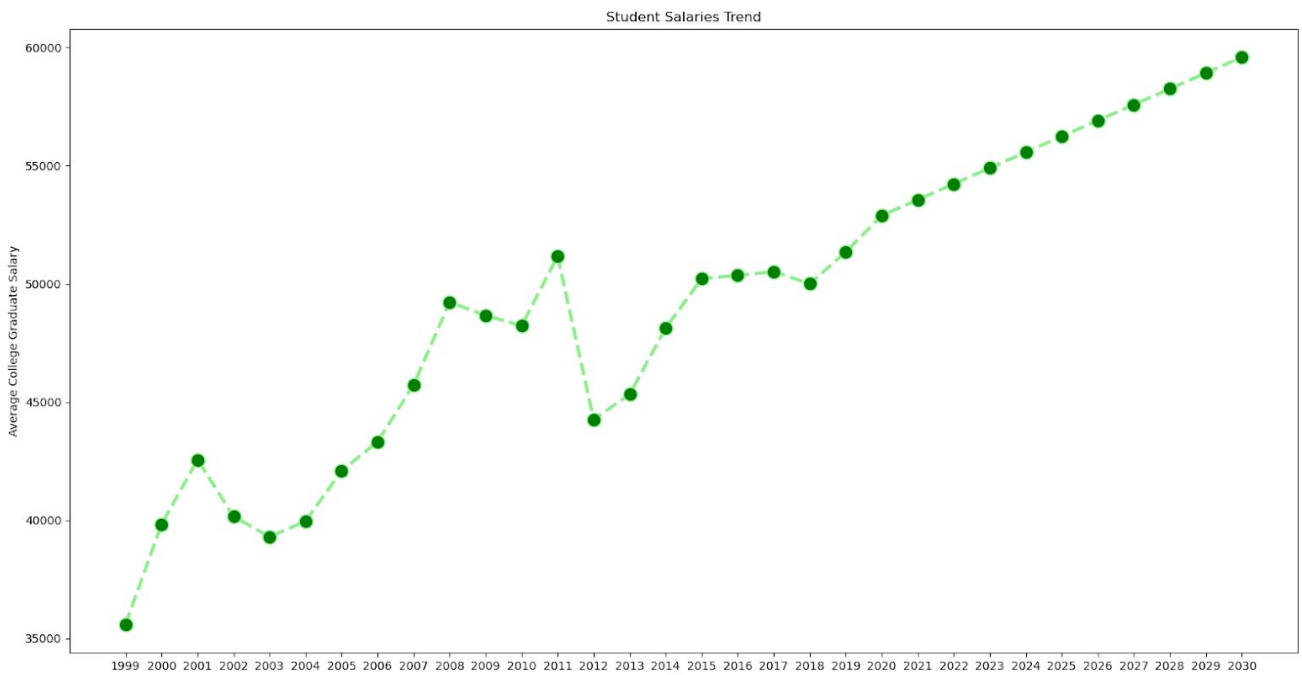


Figure 2: Average college graduate starting salary in the US from 1999 to 2030. Data from 2020 and onward is the predicted increase in salary using a linear regression model.

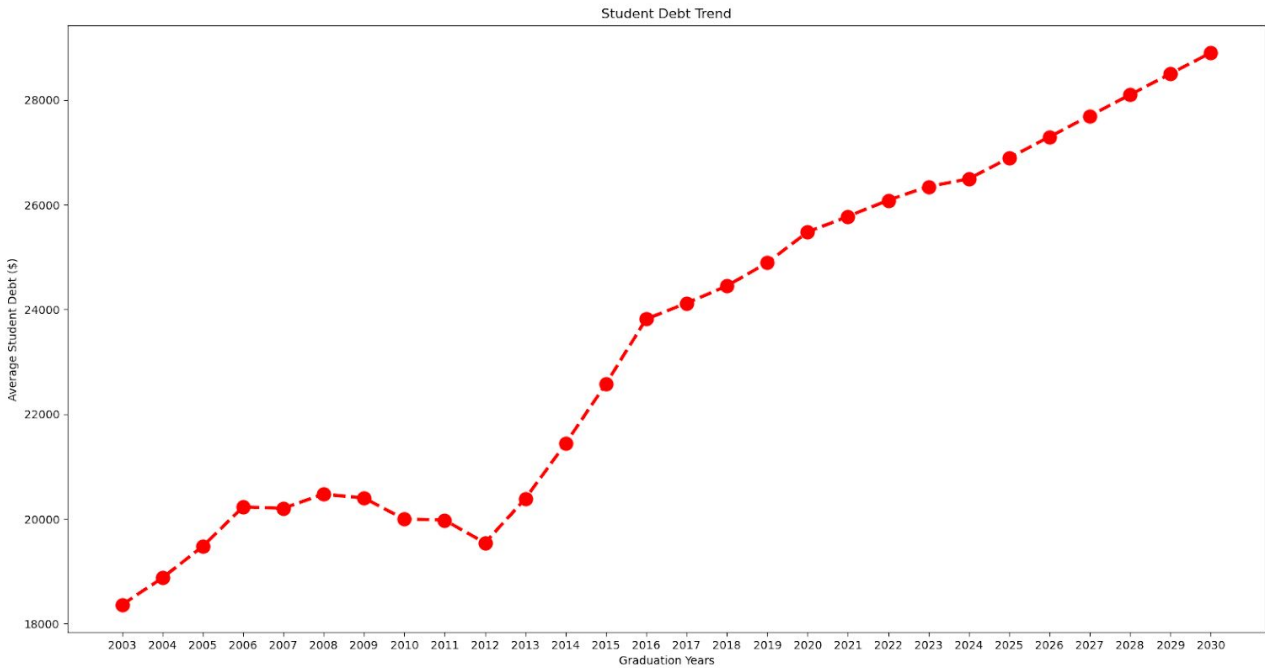


Figure 3: Average graduate debt from 1999 to 2030 with loans and salaries taken into consideration. Data from 2020 and onward is the predicted increase in student loan debt using a linear regression model.

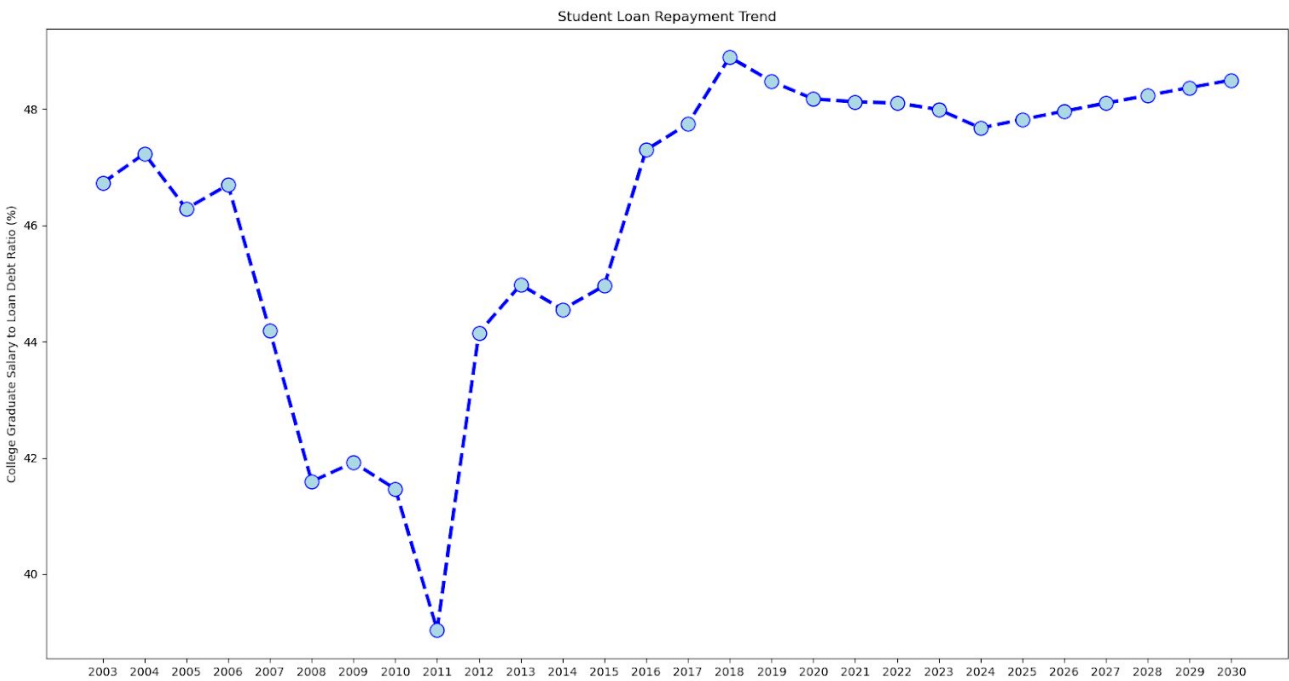


Figure 4: Average graduate salary to debt ratio each year from 1999 to 2030. Data from 2020 and onward is the predicted increase in salary to debt ratio using a linear regression model.

Conclusion: In Fig. 1, we can see that overall, the total average amount of student loans being borrowed by undergraduate and graduate students is increasing every year. Some critical events in 2011 or 2012 caused a significant increase in the average amount of loans taken by undergraduates and graduates, and the average student loans has increased steadily since then. In Fig. 2, we can see that the average graduate starting salary steadily increases, but by analyzing Fig. 3, it is clear that the salary is not enough to cover the student loan debt racked up. Fig. 4 provides the clearest perspective on this situation. The ratio of salary to debt is under 50%, meaning that the debt is higher than what the salary can cover. Further predictions into the future using the linear regression model show that this discrepancy will get worse, not better.