

FROM THE EDITOR

The curious single continuous surface named after Moebius has only one side and one edge... When following the path of its surface, one can reach any other point without ever crossing an edge.¹

This is the fifth issue of *Moebius*, the journal of The College of Liberal Arts at California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo. Its declared mission explains the journal's name: "While the vast majority of students major in applied fields, the College of Liberal Arts has the responsibility to broadly educate our undergraduates. The challenge... is to clarify to the wider community the reasons why a liberal arts background is an important, indeed, vital aspect of every individual's education."² *Moebius* is dedicated to making the University a universe, where "one can reach any other point without ever crossing an edge."

During the past two and a half years of the journal's existence, people in many departments of the University have been reflecting, communicating and acting upon a single idea that overlaps their divergent points of view: sustainability. This movement came to a head on Earth Day 2004, when President Warren Baker announced that Cal Poly had become a signatory to the Talloires Declaration, "a statement by university leaders around the world in support of 'environmental citizenship.'" "By... associating the University formally with the Declaration's sustainability principles," said President Baker, "we wish to communicate Cal Poly's commitment to play a strong and positive role in applying sustainability principles locally, in our education, research, and in the further development of our campus."

As is evident in the essays collected here, definitions of sustainability vary widely. Liberal arts interrogates meanings and facilitates conversation among them.


Many Cal Poly students, faculty, staff and administrators have embraced the idea of sustainability because it's so appropriate to our emphasis on applied knowledge—whether in architecture, engineering, agriculture, business or education. But mention the word to most people on campus and you draw a blank. It's therefore also the job of those in the liberal arts—poets, journalists, political scientists, graphic designers, philosophers—to spread the word.

The essays and interviews which follow, most of them produced specifically for this issue of *Moebius*, display the diverse perspectives, professional expertise, and intense passion of people dedicated to making sustainability central to Cal Poly's institutional identity. To place these writings in a global historical context, we include the text of the Talloires Declaration, followed by President Baker's speech upon signing it at the Convocation entitled: "Education for sustainability: Engaging the Polytechnic University." This is the first issue in which we have opened the submissions to those outside of Lib-

eral Arts and outside of our University. The important theme warranted that we embrace many disciplines.

As usual, we have some fine interviews and wonderful poetry.

A popular slogan of the sustainability movement is “Close the Loop.” This introduction closes with further reflection on the meaning of the Moebius strip itself:

*Symbolically...representing temporality, the cyclical nature of processes and eternity, it is no wonder that the twisted ring is an archetype, a symbol of infinity, present both in alchemistic iconography as the serpent biting its tail...and in contemporary consumer society as an icon of recycling.*³ 

Steven Marx, Guest Editor
Moebius

Notes

1. Vesna Petresin and Laurent-Paul Robert, “The Double Möbius Strip Studies,” *Nexus Network Journal: Architecture and Mathematics Online*, Vol. 4 No.4 (Autumn 2002)<<http://www.nexusjournal.com/PetRob.html>>.
2. <http://cla.calpoly.edu/Moebius/>.
3. Vesna Petresin and Laurent-Paul Robert, “The Double Möbius Strip Studies,” *Nexus Network Journal: Architecture and Mathematics Online*, Vol. 4 No.4 (Autumn 2002)<<http://www.nexusjournal.com/PetRob.html>>.