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From the Editor

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FROM THE EDITOR

The idea of focusing on “the corporate university” in this quarter’s issue of *Moebius* emanates from seeing those ubiquitous Pepsi machines on our campus. For the right amount of money, one supposes, we could become the “Frito-Lay College of Liberal Arts” in the not too distant future! This is not just a local phenomenon. Anyone who has been paying attention to the changes in higher education in this country can see the evidence. In the competition for students and dollars universities such as Cal Poly seem to market themselves more like traditional businesses and less as institutions of higher learning. An article published in early September of this year in the *New York Times* noted that: At the University of Illinois, more than 1,000 classes on hundreds of subjects were canceled during the last academic year because of severe budget cuts. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, meanwhile, is getting \$25 million worth of money and materials from Microsoft as part of a five year-partnership with the company to develop educational technologies.

The combination of sometimes desperate financial need and innovative ways to make money is a hallmark of a new era in the relationship between corporate culture and higher education.¹

Scholarly books with titles such as: “Shakespeare, Einstein and the Bottom Line: The Marketing of Higher Education,” and “Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education” tell the story. If students and parents have become “consumers,” what does that say about the faculty? Is *liberal arts* an anachronism?

The title of the Fall Issue, “The Corporate University?” is meant to convey the idea of a discussion. For example, what is the history of the corporation in America? How does it relate to the new ways one thinks about higher education? What role does athletics play in colleges and universities? How do college sports affect the dominant ethos on our campuses? Through essays and interviews, we explore these and other issues related to the evolving meaning of *education* in modern culture.

Additionally, we are pleased to publish two poems, a review of a recent book by a Cal Poly author, an essay on a student’s recent trip to Cuba, and an excerpt from a new work by a distinguished local writer. We hope that you continue to enjoy reading *Moebius* as much as we enjoy publishing it! ☺

Phil Fetzer, Managing Editor
Moebius

1. Lee, Felicia. “Academic Industrial Complex,” *New York Times*, September 6, 2003, A13.