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Election lesson

The Gateway is not endorsing any candidate or slate this year. However, before you start cheering, here is a general critique of the way issues have been presented this election and a short curse in the realities of transmitting

rhetoric in action Lesson One is:the Students' Union (SU) executive is not omnipotent. It has a great influence in that they chair and sit on the various boards such as Administration - which deals with all non-budgeted financial requests - which do most of the legwork for students' council, have complete access to information within the SU and can determine what sorts of information shall be deemed confidential.

Their influence with the boards is tempered by students' council, which has the ultimate decision-making authority with regards to SU affairs. Unfortunately, though, widespread student apathy toward the selection of students' council representatives means the vast majority who represent their faculty gain their positions by acclamation. This only becomes a problem when councillors forget why they are there: to administer the affairs of the SU to best benefit all students, not to engage in political games within their own little rarified world.

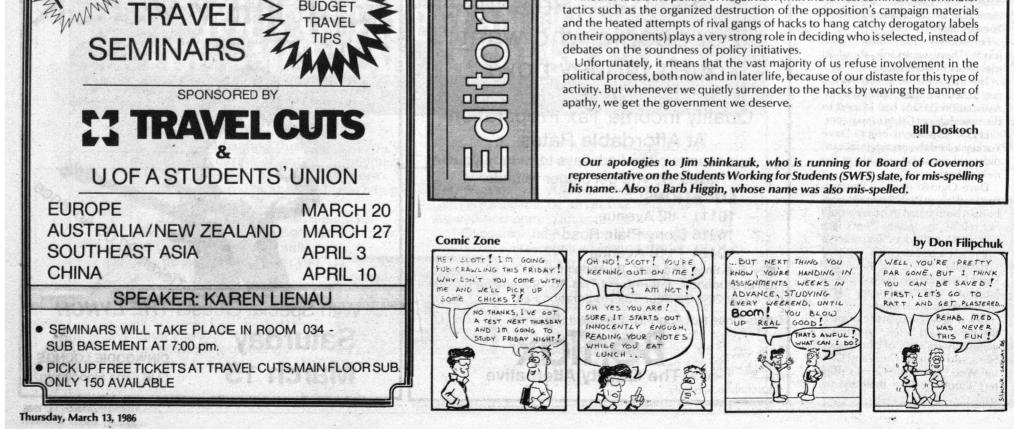
So, if councillors are there because they want to see the interests of students represented fairly and competently, then they can provide a valuable check to the executive.

You may ask yourself 'Why does the executive need checks and balances?' The answer will be: 'Because sometimes they take their promises seriously when they didn't put serious thought into them in the first place.'

As a hypothetical example, promising to slash SU fees and send service and funding levels sky-rocketing, makes great political sense in the limited-time, limited-budget election campaigns that are the reality of SU politics. With objective information sources scarce, it's really hard for the average student to make an informed decision. So the politics of image and rhetoric prevail.

However, for the purposes of this election lesson, here is an attempt to cut through some examples of bad or misleading promises. They will be done without naming the slates involved so as not to embarass the guilty: can decide if the benefits outweigh the costs?

Another fact is the politics of negativism (with the lowest common denominator



(JD)