Formatting meeting minutes with the **meetingmins** LaTeX class[*]

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Abstract

The meetingmins class formats written minutes of group meetings quickly, in a way that corresponds well with LaTeX document-writing conventions. Additional features of the meetingmins class include generation of an agenda for distribution prior to the meeting, the ability to suppress user-selected portions of the agenda, and a chair's agenda (to track meeting attendance).

1 Background

Many professionals are required to produce written minutes of group meetings. The meetingmins class provides an intuitive way to do this quickly, in a manner that corresponds well with standard LaTeX conventions. Specifically, each segment of the meeting (e.g., "Old Business") is indicated with `\section` commands, rather than using `\begin` and `\end` environment commands like the mins class from which the meetingmins class was derived.

2 New Features

`\section`
`\subsection`
`\subsubsection`

The meetingmins class duplicates and extends the functionality provided by Jim Hefferon's mins class. As stated previously, the meetingmins class utilizes the `\section` commands (down to the level of `\subsubsection`) rather than using environments. Remembering to open and close an environment is not as intuitive, efficient, or convenient as invoking the `\section` commands that all LaTeX users are accustomed to. Additionally, in editors such as Emacs, syntax highlighting typically makes section names more salient than environment names, providing a clearer visual distinction of where the user is within the document while editing. Furthermore, environment titles must be typed twice (without typographical errors), whereas section titles are typed only once (and may be permitted the odd typo, as far as LaTeX is concerned). Perhaps most importantly, using the `\section`

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[*]This file describes version 1.6, last revised 2013/10/03.

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commands allows the document to convey a hierarchical structure (which is the reason I undertook this project).

\begin{items}
\end{items}
\begin{subitems}
\end{subitems}

We cannot entirely escape the use of environments, however, because that is how numbered lists are created in LaTeX. Therefore, if numbered agenda items are desired, one needs to begin the numbered list with `\begin{items}` and end it with `\end{items}`. For `\subsection` and `\subsubsection` sections, use `\begin{subitems}` and `\end{subitems}`.[1]

agenda

By specifying `agenda` as an option in the `\documentclass` command, the document heading will read "Agenda for [date]" rather than "Minutes for [date]" and the group members will not be listed. This option is intended to help faciliate the dissemination of meeting agendas.

\begin{hiddenitems}
\end{hiddenitems}
\begin{hiddensubitems}
\end{hiddensubitems}
\begin{hiddentext}
\end{hiddentext}

There is one additional feature of the `agenda` option: numbered lists that are bracketed by `\begin{hiddenitems}` and `\end{hiddenitems}` are suppressed from the printed agenda (`\begin{hiddensubitems}` and `\end{hiddensubitems}` are also available). The `\begin{hiddentext}` and `\end{hiddentext}` commands will suppress non-enumerated text (i.e., standard paragraphs) from being printed on an agenda. The purpose of this feature is primarily for announcements; why would they be sent out in advance for all to read and then re-announced at the meeting? Any portion of the agenda can be suppressed in this way if desired. Please note that there is no need to change the name of these environments when the final minutes are produced; in the absence of the `agenda` option, all text will be printed.

chair

Specifying the `chair` option (instead of `agenda`) annotates the document as a "Chair's Agenda for [date]"; in addition, the Chair's Agenda lists the members' names along with handy checkboxes so the chair can more easily track attendance (and be reminded of who has not yet arrived.) Also, no text is hidden on the Chair's Agenda. Just to be clear: Use either the `chair` *or* the `agenda` options, not both simultaneously. The `notes` option formats minutes (not an agenda) with the header "Notes for [date]."

notes

3 Usage

Sample documents are included with this class; look in the "samples" subfolder of your installation. The source and output are reproduced on the following pages for quick reference.

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[1]This use of the `subitems` environment will remain a limitation until someone can show me how to capture the current section level for non-numbered sections. I have exhausted my capabilities in this pursuit.

3.1 Agenda (sample source code)

```
\documentclass[11pt,agenda]{meetingmins}

\setcommittee{Department of Instruction}

\setmembers{                                \section{Old Business}
  \chair{B.~Smart},                         \begin{items}
  B.~Brave,                                 \item
  D.~Claire,                                \priormins
  B.~Gone                                   \end{items}
}
                                            \section{New Business}
\setdate{October 5, 2011}                   \begin{items}
                                            \item
\begin{document}                            Discuss class schedules for next semester.
\maketitle
                                            \item
\section{Announcements}                     Discuss research plans for next semester.
\begin{hiddenitems}                         \end{items}
\item
The dean is coming today.                   \vspace{1em}
                                            \nextmeeting{Wednesday, October 19, at 3:00}
\item
The dean has canceled.                      \end{document}

\end{hiddenitems}

\section{Committee Reports}

\subsection{College-wide Committees}
\subsubsection{Library}

\subsubsection{Curriculum}
\begin{hiddensubitems}
\item
There is widespread interest in reforming
the curriculum.

\item
Unfortunately, no one seems interested
in participating on the curriculum
reform committee.
\end{hiddensubitems}

\subsection{Department Committees}
\subsubsection{Personnel}

\subsubsection{Assistant Professor Search}
```

3.2   Agenda (printed version)

Department of Instruction

Agenda for October 5, 2011

Announcements

Committee Reports

> ***College-wide Committees***
>
> *Library*
>
> *Curriculum*
>
> ***Department Committees***
>
> *Personnel*
>
> *Assistant Professor Search*

Old Business

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

New Business

1. Discuss class schedules for next semester.

2. Discuss research plans for next semester.

3.3   Chair's Agenda (sample source code)

```
\documentclass[11pt,chair]{meetingmins}

\setcommittee{Department of Instruction}

\setmembers{                              \section{Old Business}
  \chair{B.~Smart},                       \begin{items}
  B.~Brave,                               \item
  D.~Claire,                              \priormins
  B.~Gone                                 \end{items}
}
                                          \section{New Business}
\setdate{October 5, 2011}                 \begin{items}
                                          \item
\begin{document}                          Discuss class schedules for next semester.
\maketitle
                                          \item
\section{Announcements}                   Discuss research plans for next semester.
\begin{hiddenitems}                       \end{items}
\item
The dean is coming today.                 \vspace{1em}
                                          \nextmeeting{Wednesday, October 19, at 3:00}
\item
The dean has canceled.                    \end{document}

\end{hiddenitems}

\section{Committee Reports}

\subsection{College-wide Committees}
\subsubsection{Library}

\subsubsection{Curriculum {\rm (D.~Claire)}}
\begin{hiddensubitems}
\item
There is widespread interest in reforming
the curriculum.

\item
Unfortunately, no one seems interested
in participating on the curriculum
reform committee.
\end{hiddensubitems}

\subsection{Department Committees}
\subsubsection{Personnel}

\subsubsection{Assistant Professor Search}
```

3.4 Chair's Agenda (printed version)

Department of Instruction

Chair's Agenda for October 5, 2011

Members: ☐ B. Smart (Chair), ☐ B. Brave, ☐ D. Claire, ☐ B. Gone

Announcements

1. The dean is coming today.

2. The dean has canceled.

Committee Reports

College-wide Committees

Library —

Curriculum (D. Claire) —

1. There is widespread interest in reforming the curriculum.

2. Unfortunately, no one seems interested in participating on the curriculum reform committee.

Department Committees

Personnel —

Assistant Professor Search —

Old Business

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

New Business

1. Discuss class schedules for next semester.

2. Discuss research plans for next semester.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 19, at 3:00

3.5 Minutes (sample source code)

```
\documentclass[11pt]{meetingmins}

\setcommittee{Department of Instruction}

\setmembers{                           \item
  \chair{B.~Smart},                    Unfortunately, no one seems interested
  B.~Brave,                            in participating on the curriculum
  D.~Claire,                           reform committee.
  B.~Gone                              \end{hiddensubitems}
}
                                       \subsection{Department Committees}
\setdate{October 5, 2011}              \subsubsection{Personnel}

\setpresent{                           \subsubsection{Assistant Professor Search}
  \chair{B.~Smart},
  B.~Brave,                            \section{Old Business}
  D.~Claire                            \begin{items}
}                                      \item
                                       \priormins
\absent{B.~Gone \textit{(sabbatical)}} \end{items}


\alsopresent{B.~There}                 \section{New Business}
                                       \begin{items}
\begin{document}                       \item
\maketitle                             We will teach classes next semester.

\section{Announcements}                \item
\begin{hiddenitems}                    We will do research next semester.
\item                                  \end{items}
The dean is coming today.
                                       \vspace{1em}
\item                                  \nextmeeting{Wednesday, October 19, at 3:00}
The dean has canceled.
                                       \end{document}
\end{hiddenitems}

\section{Committee Reports}

\subsection{College-wide Committees}
\subsubsection{Library}
The library still has books that no one has read.

\subsubsection{Curriculum {\rm (D.~Claire)}}
\begin{hiddensubitems}
\item
There is widespread interest in reforming
the curriculum.
```

3.6 Minutes (printed version)

Department of Instruction

Minutes for October 5, 2011

Present: B. Smart (Chair), B. Brave, D. Claire

Absent: B. Gone *(sabbatical)*

Also present: B. There

Announcements

1. The dean is coming today.

2. The dean has canceled.

Committee Reports

College-wide Committees

Library — The library still has books that no one has read.

Curriculum (D. Claire) —

1. There is widespread interest in reforming the curriculum.

2. Unfortunately, no one seems interested in participating on the curriculum reform committee.

Department Committees

Personnel — No one can have a raise this year.

Assistant Professor Search — We are looking for someone who will do a lot for very little money.

Old Business

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

New Business

1. We will teach classes next semester.

2. We will do research next semester.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 19, at 3:00

Change History