

The `meetingmins` L^AT_EX class: Hierarchically organized meeting agendas and minutes

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Abstract

Many professionals (including faculty in higher education) must at least occasionally document the happenings of group meetings. Although a few different L^AT_EX classes are available for this purpose, the `meetingmins` class is simple and straightforward and most importantly, allows for a hierarchical organization of minutes using standard L^AT_EX `\section` commands. An agenda function is also available.

1 Introduction

Faculty in higher education and other professionals are often expected to compose a written record of group meetings. In addition, the agenda for these meetings is sometimes expected to be circulated in advance. A few L^AT_EX classes are available for formatting meeting minutes. Some are simple; others (I'm looking at you, `minutes`) are extraordinarily powerful but rather complicated. To the best of my knowledge, none integrates an agenda function.

The `meetingmins` class (<http://ctan.org/pkg/meetingmins>) takes a middle-of-the-road approach, providing a flexible document structure yet including all of the basics needed to chronicle the typical meeting. It is based on Jim Hefferon's `mins` class (<http://tug.org/pracjourn/2005-4/hefferon/>), which has a one-level (non-hierarchical) document structure. In departmental meetings at academic institutions, faculty report back from departmental committees as well as various institution-wide committees. Thus a hierarchical document structure (with each committee report being subordinate to either the department or the institution) is required to adequately represent the structure of the meeting.

2 Basic features

The nuts and bolts are all here, via commands in the document preamble: the group's name, meeting date, members present, members absent, and guests. The absentee and guest lines are not printed if they are not needed. There is also a `\nextmeeting` command that can be included at the end of the document to display the next meeting date. See the `meetingmins` documentation for details.

There are no pre-established sections within the body of the document; simply call the `\section` command in the standard way to create sections such as Announcements, Old Business, etc., titled and sequenced as you desire. Numbered items are

available within any section by using an environment named `items`.

3 Distinctive features

3.1 Using `\section` commands to establish hierarchy

To transparently represent the hierarchical structure of the document, the standard L^AT_EX `\section` commands are used (down to `\subsubsection`). The document structure is then visually conveyed through the use of indentation and other formatting. More detail and examples are provided in the `meetingmins` documentation.

3.2 Agenda

Even the powerful `minutes` class does not support the creation of meeting agendas, so the lowly `meetingmins` steps in to fill the gap. To create an agenda, specify the `agenda` option when the class is loaded. The printed document will contain a skeleton agenda, titled "Agenda for *<date>*" underneath the committee/department name. Numbered items of business will also be printed if they have not been suppressed (see next section).

3.3 Hidden items

Agenda items can be suppressed from being printed by using the `hiddenitems` environment (in place of the `items` environment). No need to give away the surprise announcement before the meeting! The `hiddenitems` environment can be used in any section of the document. When the `agenda` option is removed from the `\documentclass` line to produce the minutes of the meeting, all items in `hiddenitems` environments will be printed; there is no need to alter environment names.

3.4 Chair's agenda

How many meetings have you attended (or led) in which you asked, "Who is missing?" With the chair's agenda, that question is moot. Specify the `chair` option (instead of `agenda` — don't use both) and a handy list of members will be printed at the top of the agenda, complete with checkboxes beside each name to facilitate taking attendance. And there are no surprises on the chair's agenda; `hiddenitems` environments are printed for easy reference by the chair throughout the meeting.

4 Sample documents

The `meetingmins` documentation includes complete samples for (a) an agenda containing some hidden items; (b) a chair's agenda; and (c) the meeting

Department of Instruction Agenda for October 5, 2011	Department of Instruction Chair's Agenda for October 5, 2011
Announcements	Members: <input type="checkbox"/> B. Smart (Chair), <input type="checkbox"/> B. Brave, <input type="checkbox"/> D. Claire, <input type="checkbox"/> B. Gone
Committee Reports	Announcements
<i>College-wide Committees</i>	1. The chair is retiring.
<i>Library</i>	2. The dean is coming today to announce the chair's replacement.
<i>Curriculum</i>	Committee Reports
Department Committees	<i>College-wide Committees</i>
<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Library</i>
<i>Assistant Professor Search</i>	<i>Curriculum</i>
Old Business	1. There is widespread interest in reforming the curriculum.
1. Approve minutes from the September 7 meeting.	2. Unfortunately, no one seems interested in participating on the curriculum reform committee.
New Business	Department Committees
1. Discuss class schedules for next semester.	<i>Personnel</i>
2. Discuss research plans for next semester.	<i>Assistant Professor Search</i>
	Old Business
	1. Approve minutes from the September 7 meeting.
	New Business
	1. Discuss class schedules for next semester.
	2. Discuss research plans for next semester.
	Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 2, at 3:00

Figure 1: Example participant and chair's agenda.

minutes. Users are encouraged to consult and modify these samples for their own use.

4.1 Example source

Here is the source for the output shown in Figure 1. The chair's agenda is created by replacing `agenda` with `chair` in the first line; no other changes.

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

\setcommittee{Department of Instruction}

\setmembers{
  \chair{B.~Smart},
  B.~Brave,
  D.~Claire,
  B.~Gone
}
\setdate{October 5, 2011}

\begin{document}
\maketitle

\section{Announcements}
\begin{hiddenitems}
\item
The chair is retiring.

\item
The dean is coming today to announce
the chair's replacement.
```

```
\end{hiddenitems}

\section{Committee Reports}

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

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

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

...

\nextmeeting{Wednesday, November 2, at 3:00}

\end{document}
```

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