Tim’s complete Readme on the Higher Education Report Card:

Hello!

Glad you want to make the report card after me. First off, we need to thank Marcus Kinsella for a great job and doing, in my opinion, 95% of the work in getting the code and infrastructure for the report card. He’s a computer science grad student at UCSD, and all the glory goes to him.

I’m going to try to tell you everything to get this thing going for you on your computer. Hopefully you have some computer experience. The three you need are unix, python, and latex.

First, let’s go through how this thing works. In the latest version of this report card, we don’t separate budget votes and legislative votes, we just put everything into LegVotes.csv

LegVotes.csv is where everything starts. This document has the bills, dates, locations, motion and score we want to give it. The python code, reportcard.py, takes this document, and pulls all the “usernames” of the yes, no, and abstain votes online. It takes these usernames and fills out the ReportCard.xls. This giant excel sheet just lists all the “usernames” of the politicians and all of their votes, and calculates their final score.

In order to make the actual report card in latex, handout.tex is the basis for all the report cards, and it substitutes all of the politicans info into their own report card. The reason why I say “usernames” is because the names for the votes online don’t always correspond to the politicians last names. Whenever there are repeat last names(a few Perez or Hernandez) then they get different usernames. Memberinfo.csv matches those usernames with the politicians full names, districts, party etc… and it fills out the latex report card based on that. Same goes for BillDescriptions.csv. Those words are what end up on the report card.

The images folder holds the pictures of all the politicians.

Ok that “summary” took much longer than I anticipated.

**Get started in 5 minutes instructions**

Hopefully you are working on a mac or linux, something with terminal or X11. If you’re on windows, you’ll probably have to look up how to start running commands on your machine. Macs come pre-installed with python, so all you’d need to install is Latex. I personally use TexShop, but they are all around the same. You will need to download and install beautifulsoup 4 online.

The two basic commands in unix are cd and ls. Read online how to use these, its pretty simple. Then download beautiful soup below

<http://www.crummy.com/software/BeautifulSoup/>

download beautiful soup 4.1.3, cd to the directory, and type as they instruct

pip install beautifulsoup4 into the terminal. At this point just cd to the folder and type “python reportcard.py BudgetVotes.csv LegVotes.csv” If you look at your folder again, there should be a folder called handout. This folder should be filled with all the .tex files. Open one up in texshop, and create, in texshop its “command T” Your first one should be made! Congratulations, you’re an expert on the report card and you’re stuck making the report card forever!!

Now that you’ve made the 2011-2012 report card, you want to make future report cards with different people and different bills and different everything. Get your Adderall and Tylenol out. In theory its not that hard, we just need to make the correct adjustments to each of the major files, reportcard.py, LegVotes.csv, memberinfo.csv, Billdescriptions.csv, handout.tex, images folder. So let’s go through each of these one by one, but first one big note.

**UTF-8**

This may be one of the biggest headaches. All of the text files: Legvotes.csv, memberinfo.csv, Billdescriptions.csv, must be saved in utf-8 format. Read online what utf-8 means, but its simply a different way that letters are coded in a system of zeroes and 1s. The biggest problem is latino names with accents, but we’ll get to that. As far as I know, the new versions of excel  **do not** have the option of saving in utf-8. Because of that, I use pages and textedit to save into utf-8 format. So for example, open up BillDescriptions.csv in textedit and duplicate it under the file toolbar. Then save the copy, but under plain text encoding, make sure you select UTF-8 . You will be doing this very often for all of the files.

**LegVotes.csv**

Someone should be giving you a list of bills to include in the report card. They should also tell you the dates that the senate and assembly voted on these bills as well as the score. If you look at the 2011-2012 report card, the first bill is AB 970. You’ll be looking at this website to get the info you need

<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/postquery?bill_number=ab_970&sess=PREV&house=B&author=fong>

scroll to the bottom and you should see where votes take place. You probably want to select the latest assembly floor vote and the latest senate floor vote. These should correspond to the list that someone gave you of votes we want to include in the report card. If you click on “assembly floor” you’ll see all the information at the top including the motion. This is how we fill out LegVotes.csv. Copy in this information, the bill number, Bill place, vote date, motion, and the score. After the motion , tab once, then the score number. Save in Utf-8 format.

**BillDescriptions.csv**

This one is pretty self explanatory, just keep the descriptions short so it fits in the box in the report card. Save in UTF-8

**Memberinfo.csv**

This one is probably the biggest \*\*\*\*\*. There is a lot you will need to do manually to get this one correct. There are six pieces of information you need to get from different sources, and organize properly. First, there are two additional python files to help you out. Getsenate.py and getassembly.py. Run these two files by doing “python getsenate.py >> senatornames.txt” you’ll have a list of the senators full names, party, and district number. I would recommend opening this in excel and sorting by name. Now go to any senate floor vote <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/bilinfo.html>

And pick any bill. All the “usernames” are listed. Copy these one by one into your excel sheet. You now have 4 out of the 6 items. California gets redistricted every 10 years which means that the cities in district 1 in 2011 are the same cities in district 1 in 2013. This means that the cities I have in the 2013 report card should be good for 10 more years. Anyhow, I attached the file California districts. It lists all the districts and the cities they represent by population. The top three cities are listed for each district. However you should be able to just copy the districts over. Now for pictures. There is an images folder. You will need to go the California senate website and download each photo individually and either take note of the name, or rename it and put it into the excel file. Because of redistricting, these files aren’t always named correctly. For example, the representative of the 36th district might have his photo named “33.jpg” because he used to represent the 33rd before redistricting. So the best bet is to download each photo and copy the name of the file into the excel file. Have fun. Now repeat for the assemblymembers. Yup it’s a bitch.

**Reportcard.py**

There are only a couple things to change in here. In line 38, there’s a year, change it to whatever the corresponding year it is, in sets of 2, so 2011-2012, 2013-2014, 2015-2016…

If you want to change what dictates and A or a B, there’s an obvious spot in lines 220-261 for that, and I added in a bit of code to get the numerical score out of it at #numberscore.

**Handout.tex**

I’ve worked pretty hard to make the entire reportcard fit onto 1 sheet of paper. You can figure out the 10pt font at the top and the margins at the bottom of the packages.

You’ll want to change the 2012 to whatever year in line 19.

Line 20 is how the picture, grade, and text are split. They need to add up to 1

Line 21, the picture width needs to be the same as the picture width right above it

**Individual Report Cards**

The reportcard generates the files, but there are some changes you’ll need to make manually. The representatives get extra points for being the one to introduce legislation. So in the reportcard.xls file, add in the extra points to get the new percentages. For these people you’ll need to do a few things. In line 22 change grade\_color if he got bumped from a B to an A, the grade(add a plus or minus if necessary) definitely change the numberscore. Next to member name, put a $\star$ to put a star next to their name. Then next to the bill in which they introduced, put another $\star$ at the beginning to highlight it, and at the end of the bill description, put a “(+2 points)” or however many points the committee deems appropriate.

**Finishing it up**

You can see that there’s a folder called handouts, with all the tex files. I made an automator script that will generate these automatically. You just have to open “texmaker” (mac only) and put all the files into that folder, (120 of them) Then hit run. Once in a while, it skips over some of them, so watch your screen, and when your computer beeps, take notes on the current senator that it missed or the senator before the one that is displayed.

Now go back to the ones that the program missed and do them individually. Tell finder to list all the files by type, and scroll down to where they are pdfs. Select all 120 of them and open in preview. Then print it, but instead save as a pdf, so that its one pdf that is a set of hopefully 120 pages. You’re done!