1. The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM by David Beaulieu. He welcomed everyone to the meeting; commenting that he finds these meetings to be a very good forum for maintaining open and constructive communication on distance education issues with the District Academic Senate. He commented that at the last Board of Trustee’s Meeting two board members discussed the need to place emphasis on the use of technology in instruction and in the college mission statements. He suggested we need to be talking more about technology and distance education throughout the District. L. Delzeit suggested the issue could be rephrased as “Digital Learning,” encompassing both the use of technology and the integration of DE on the campus. She said the DE Coordinators’ functions and responsibilities are increasingly impacting the entire campuses with more web enhanced classes. She suggested we look at the larger picture. David said this lends credence to the need for the stakeholder’s group to meet more than twice a year. He said he and Don Gauthier would speak with the Chancellor at their next consultation meeting regarding DE to see if there are ways we can further work together. David also recommended the group try to communicate more effectively both on the campuses and at the District level. It was suggested that the announcement of these meetings be widely distributed and the minutes be posted online. D. Gauthier offered to post the minutes on the District Academic Senate website. David then reviewed the agenda and moved to the first item.

2. Contract Issues: David Beaulieu reported that he and D. Gauthier met again with Armida Ornelas and Joan Waddell regarding the composition of the campus DE Committees (Article 40); he stated that proficiencies were also discussed. David explained that while academic issues clearly fall under the preview of the Senate, and DE is an academic program, there are also clearly some union issues in DE, just not a majority or even fifty percent share. He stated the DAS leadership has objected to the language in the new contract, as it seems to overreach into senate areas. Some changes have been agreed to. As a result of the discussion, the two bodies have reached a tentative agreement to change the wording of Article 40 so the membership of the Campus DE committees would have equal representation of the Academic Senate and the AFT; that the composition of the committees would be primarily faculty; that faculty would comprise more than 50% of the voting members of the committee. In addition, the campus DE Committees would focus on discussing “matters of mutual concern to the senate and union.” The proposed changes would not be an MOU but a Memo of Clarification that would be presented to the Chancellor for approval sometime in the spring.

E. Ichon asked that the wording “matters of mutual concern” be broadened. On his campus the DE Committee has discussed many issues related to distance education and limiting the discussion to matters of mutual concerns implies that agreement must be obtained. He expressed
concern that significant distance education issues might not be addressed due to the proposed wording. He stated that the campus distance education committees are the best place for those discussions. He also suggested that the wording that the DE Committee “should report to the college’s Educational Planning Committee” include “or its equivalent,” as not all colleges have an Educational Planning Committee. D. Jordan concurred that the wording regarding matters of mutual concern is limiting; he pointed out that Academic Senate members are selected through a democratic process, while AFT representatives are appointed by the chapter chair. Different agendas could be represented. D. Beaulieu responded that the DE Committees are academic committees, they should report to the EPC, which is a Senate committee. Article 40 does have some union issues; it just requires a little finessing, David said.

Speaking by phone, Bill Elarton (AFT Rep.) said the problem was the campus committees were creating a second class of employees, requiring additional work in preparing course shells for curriculum review or before the beginning of the semester. He stated that faculty evaluation is not a DE issue; it is a department chair responsibility. D. Jordan responded that having faculty meet minimum qualifications and complete a training course in the course management system helps ensure the academic quality of a class. W. Bass said that teaching online is not a requirement; it is an option for faculty. J. Perret responded by saying it is not an option if the department chair is limiting classes. P. Atkinson said she is not aware of a single instance where a faculty has been required to teach an online class. Several others concurred. B. Elarton said the concern of the union is how a faculty member proves he or she has the competencies to teach online. Proving one is competent to use a CMS is different than requiring a training course, according to Elarton. They (the AFT) have no problem with faculty proving they are qualified to teach online but they should be able to demonstrate proficiency in multiple ways, such as showing previous courses they have taught online, including on a different CMS. Having them prepare a class beforehand was the problem. P. Daw spoke about maintaining quality in online classes. E. Ichon responded that it is a department chair issue, they are responsible for faculty evaluation. B. Elarton agreed. D. Gauthier said we are taking proficiency out of context, that the department chair should be the one to determine proficiency. P. Daw asked that a member of the DE committee be involved in future meeting with the Academic Senate and AFT. D. Beaulieu agreed that the second issue (faculty training and demonstration of proficiencies) should have teaching faculty represented. Noting that the proposed agreement included more than the first issue alone (namely, the composition of the campus DE committees and the language), P. McKenna asked that the agreement not be finalized without further input for the DE Coordinators. D. Beaulieu stated the Academic Senate had intended to ask for feedback from this group. Due to the amount of time spent on this one agenda item, D. Beaulieu suggested the Stakeholder’s group meet again in February to discuss this further and moved to the next agenda item.

3. Accreditation Concerns. D. Jordan expressed appreciation for the Mock Accreditation visits that were conducted in October. K. Hussain agreed the visits were very helpful. D. Jordan discussed one identified need, online tutoring; he said he hoped to have a pilot program developed by March. W. Bass reported that Pierce has tutoring online for both math and English but it is funded by a Title V grant. L. Delzeit proposed that a ratio be established on the campuses that would require online tutoring be funded in proportion to the number of online students. D. Beaulieu suggested that idea be presented to TPPC, the Vice President’s Council, and perhaps the Vice Chancellor. D. Jordan also expressed concern that the costs for CMS have not been institutionalized on many campuses. E. Ichon said at West the CMS is funded by Program 100, but several others agreed with Jordan’s concerns.

4. Status of State Verification. D. Gauthier reported that Vice Chancellor Delahoussaye has initiated contact with every state where the District Research Office identified students enrolled in
online classes or with faculty with an out-of-state address. To date she has received approval from one state, Maine. She said she would provide an update when responses are received from ten states. Don said he would request an update prior to the next Stakeholders’ meeting.

5. Student Authentication Policy. L. Delzeit reminded the committee that accreditation regulations require colleges to have a board-approved student authentication policy. While the LACCD has an authentication practice that probably meets the regulations, the practice has not been approved by the Board of Trustees. She agreed to circulate a draft policy for review and comment. D. Gauthier said this needs to be completed and in place prior to the accreditation visits in March. It can take more than a month to place an item on the Board Agenda. He suggested the Academic Senate help by placing a Emergency Motion on the DAS Agenda so the authentication policy could be discussed at their Dec. 18 meeting. It could then be placed on a Board Agenda as a DAS item. He stated the authentication policy should also be taken to the campus VP’s, local DE Committee’s, and perhaps the Technology Committees. J. Perret said it should be clearly be vetted on the campuses. Linda agreed to send D. Gauthier a possible policy before the Dec. 18 DAS meeting.

6. Sick Days. D. Gauthier said there are issues with how DE classes are entered into SAP with personnel assignments; apparently, since DE classes are coded as independent study, faculty are not able to record and get paid for sick days. This issue will require further research but need to be resolved. L. Delzeit said that synchronous classes are also being coded as independent study and they should not be. Classes that are coded as independent study receive less apportionment; coordinators should closely monitor the coding of online classes to ensure they are coded correctly. E. Ichon agreed that synchronous class should not be coded as independent study.

7. Next Meeting. It was agreed that there are many issues that require further discussion; that the Stakeholders should meet again before the accreditation visits in March. The next meeting was scheduled for 10:00 AM Monday, January 28, 2013.

P. McDenna, recorder