[Note: This is the second of 3 “reports” I completed in February/March about different aspects of problems/solutions I’ve been thinking about regarding Peralta, DAS, and Laney. They’re interrelated and meant to be of a piece, really, because functionally the only way to promote the better structures, processes, and systems that are needed in Peralta is BOTH from the bottom-up AND top-down.]

[**DAS: It has…issues**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dc_6dlY5Qnk)**.**

[**Problem**](https://youtu.be/F9WSwm5qtcE?t=12): DAS suffers from a lack of purpose, a lack of constituency, a lack of legitimacy, a lack of relevance, a lack of capacity, and a lack of effectiveness.

1. [**DAS needs purpose**](https://youtu.be/aEtm69mLK6w?t=48): DAS exists because it is supposed to as a result of Title V/accreditation. Beyond that it needs a reason for existence beyond pretending that it is upholding/carrying out “[**10+1**](https://youtu.be/7yeA7a0uS3A?t=31)” because that’s an arcane abstraction that’s largely meaningless. DAS needs something more as its purpose.
2. [**DAS needs a constituency**](https://youtu.be/e9mf3Bypyk8?t=115): Part of this purpose needs to connect to an actual constituency because representing a bureaucratic necessity (“[**10+1**](https://youtu.be/7yeA7a0uS3A?t=31)”) means there’s no real tie to anyone/anything beyond the basic function to represent “[**10+1**](https://youtu.be/7yeA7a0uS3A?t=31)” which, again, is largely meaningless. DAS needs to represent specific constituencies in order to derive a purpose other than its mere existence.
3. [**DAS needs legitimacy**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GM-e46xdcUo): Because neither representatives on DAS nor faculty more generally care much about the particulars of “[**10+1**](https://youtu.be/7yeA7a0uS3A?t=31)” (and few could tell you what they are) attempts to exercise a role based on “[**10+1**](https://youtu.be/7yeA7a0uS3A?t=31)” always ring hollow because there’s no meaningful connection between “[**10+1**](https://youtu.be/7yeA7a0uS3A?t=31)” and anything in the District. By its very nature at this point, DAS exists to either rubberstamp things, discuss things but do nothing (what’s the mechanism for action?), or make symbolic “recommendations” that have no present audience or influence.
4. [**DAS needs relevance**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CeROZq0c-RY): Much of the District community has no idea what DAS is or does and it doesn’t really matter to their experiences in the District because DAS as a specific and distinct body is irrelevant at the College or District level—even if existing integrated planning functioned (it doesn't!) there are other bodies that would impact the District community in a way that DAS wouldn’t.
5. [**DAS needs capacity**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKqXu-5jw60):DAS is all talkbecause of the above, but even if it tried to exercise some kind of power (if hasn’t!) it lacks the capacity to do so because its current design is premised on a College-level service/focus because of its composition and purposelessness. The only “DAS”-specific position ([**President**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8oTyungdM8)) is chosen by DAS and has no purpose, constituency, or legitimacy beyond “be [**President of DAS**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8oTyungdM8).” This means that the capacity of DAS to do anything beyond have meetings, attend other meetings, and talk (a lot) is basically nonexistent.
6. [**DAS needs effectiveness**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LfmrHTdXgK4): All of this is “academic” in the sense that as long as DAS does nothing/is unwilling to do anything it’s not particularly important to worry about it. DAS needs to make a meaningful difference or have the possibility of making a meaningful difference to be worth faculty and others investing their time and attention to it (this isn’t the case right now).

[**What to do with DAS?**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1blQRrM4TA)

**Proposal 1:** [**Rethink DAS**](https://youtu.be/b6t4oe4ELoA?t=8)**.** There’s no reason DAS has to exist only to fulfill a banal bureaucratic / accreditation function. Why not have it take a more meaningful / functional purpose (in addition to the bureaucratic box-ticking)?

**Proposal 2:** [**Revise DAS**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXeTsWGPT0w). You can rethink DAS alongside revising the DAS Constitution; it’s a poor document that needs to be revised but that process is made difficult because few people, either on DAS or off DAS, care about the Constitution because it’s…DAS. Having an open and inclusive process in revising the Constitution could be an opportunity to build purpose, constituencies, legitimacy, and relevance.

**Proposal 3:** [**Make DAS Representative**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1c-QSe7uU0).DAS composition is incoherent and unrepresentative. Representation is indirect, inequitable, and there’s no pretense that DAS represents a collective District or purpose. Instead, it operates functionally more like a cabinet with no constituency. At the very least the President should be elected by all faculty and it would also make more sense to have specific DAS representatives voted on by everyone or specific constituencies (CTE, PTers, etc.).

**Proposal 4:** [**Redo DAS**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F57G5nV1q6k). Having a membership that’s basically [**Faculty Presidents**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JivPEYjYd20) and coterie also means there’s little expertise/wider interest in anything reflected other than the self-selection of who’s willing to do a job (“**[Faculty President](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8oTyungdM8)**”) that mostly involves spending time in meetings and engaging in “[**robust discussion**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fv4D0o41Aj8).” Then, because it lacks specific expertise/wider interests/”time,” DAS generally does what [**Faculty Presidents**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JivPEYjYd20) do: “[**robust discussion**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fv4D0o41Aj8)” and [**rubberstamp**](https://youtu.be/Osfp6LyUuZU?t=48). Why not build a larger/better body that incorporates a wider and more specialized membership? Example: including faculty chairs of committees or standing faculty sub-committees to provide oversight/recommendations on specialized areas.

**Proposal 5:** [**Review DAS**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZ5LpwO-An4). DAS operates in its own silo which then means its free to sort of wallow in its own “[**DASitude**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVA-Bx4rNc0)” (“Why do anything when you can talk about doing nothing?”) where it lazily assesses itself based on its own terms (often undefined)—that’s not a mechanism for representation or improvement. There needs to be communication, transparency and accountability between DAS and the wider community to promote effectiveness and relevance. That there hasn’t been for years now enables inertia and “[**DASitude**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVA-Bx4rNc0)” (“We did nothing last year or this year…so let’s talk a lot about what we’ll do next year!”). There’s no reason DAS has to be part of “Peralta’s 99 Problems” (which it absolutely is right now).

**Proposal 6:** [**Get More from DAS**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cd4-UnU8lWY). DAS doesn’t have to be terrible.It isn’t made up of people actively seeking to do badly; it’s just a disorganized, unprepared, and poorly conceived / composed body of people who frequently seem overwhelmed and in need of a lot of support / help and energy and ideas for change. Pushing / supporting DAS to be/do better and holding it accountable when it’s doing poorly (going on years now!) is the only way forward to a better DAS and better District…