

# **The CUNY Academic Commons**

Fostering Connection and Collaboration  
Across the CUNY System

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Annual Report 2014



## About the CUNY Academic Commons

The CUNY Academic Commons is an academic social networking platform designed to facilitate connections and collaboration across the 24-campus City University of New York system. Built, maintained, and managed by CUNY faculty, staff, and graduate students for the CUNY community, the Commons has helped over 5,100 members integrate technology into the university's academic missions of teaching, research, and service. Used widely as a shared space for individuals, campus committees, and academic departments, the site contains a collection of tools that help groups of colleagues collaborate and communicate with one another.

## An Open Network for All of CUNY

The Commons is open to all faculty, administrators, staff, and graduate students across the CUNY system. It is used by members from every campus in the system and is designed to support and extend cross-campus work.

## Cutting-Edge, Widely-Used Code

The CUNY Academic Commons software development team actively develops new features for the Commons and regularly releases its code to the public; plugins developed by the Commons team have been downloaded over **346,000 times** and larger software projects to which the Commons contributes code have been downloaded over **2 million times**. The Commons In A Box platform, developed by the CUNY Academic Commons team, allows other institutions to create sites modeled on CUNY Academic Commons. Having won an award in 2013 for the Best Digital Humanities Tool, it is used by a variety of high-profile organizations including the Modern Language Association, The State University of New York, The Johns Hopkins University Press, and Arizona State University.

## Enabling Partnerships for Further Development

Funding from the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs has created opportunities for The CUNY Academic Commons to build partnerships with The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Mellon Foundation.

## The CUNY Academic Commons: Continued Growth

### Current Statistics At a Glance

*(as of 7/24/14; comparisons to 1 year ago):*

5,097 Members (↑ 23%)

574 Groups (↑ 21.6%)

1,177 Sites (↑ 30%)

### Commons Site Traffic

1,631,503 Pages viewed

September 2013-June 2014

### Social Media

Twitter Followers:

@cunycommons: 2,600 (↑ 44%)

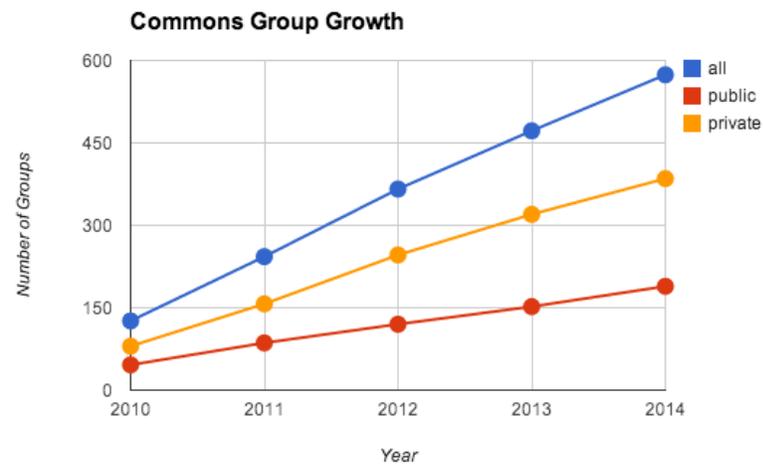
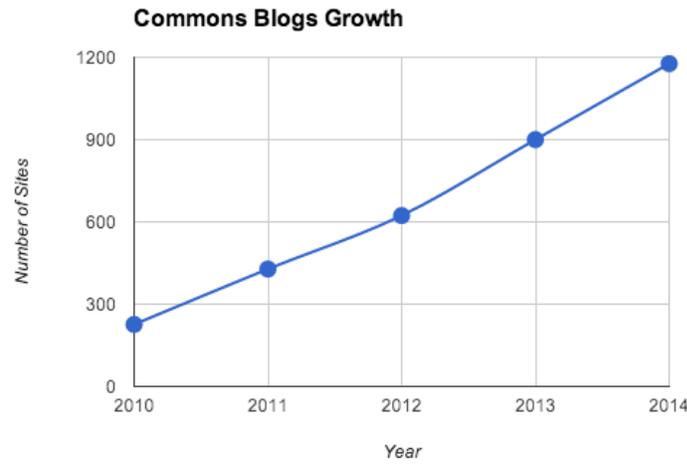
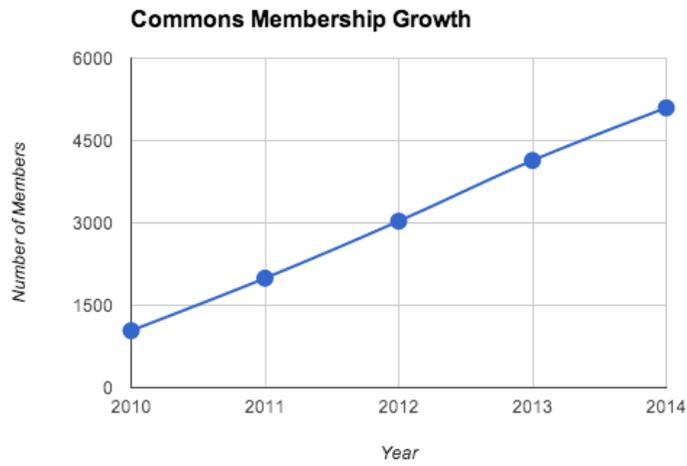
@cbox: 543 (↑ 46%)

Facebook Fans:

193 (↑ 22%)

Google+ Followers:

105 (↑ 517%)



# CUNY Academic Commons: Free Software Contributions

The CUNY Academic Commons is built on the free WordPress and BuddyPress platforms, and continues to be an active contributor to those projects and their communities. WordPress plugins authored by the CUNY Academic Commons have been downloaded over **346,000 times**. When possible, the Commons team contributes to the parent projects as well. In the past year, WordPress itself has been improved as a direct result of Commons work on at least one occasion. And BuddyPress – a major free software project of its own, with all-time downloads surpassing **2 million** – counts two members of the Commons development team among its maintainers. During the 2013-14 year, significant portions of BuddyPress work was done either directly or indirectly under the aegis of the Commons, including major performance improvements in BuddyPress 2.0 and group administration tools in BuddyPress 1.7 and 1.8.

## The CUNY Academic Commons: Publications

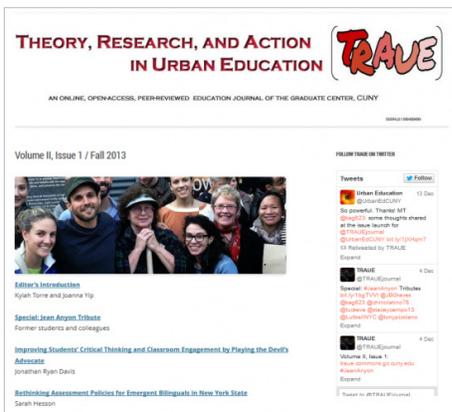
We are pleased to host an increasing number of publications which have chosen to take advantage of the community and host their work on the Commons. These are just a few examples.



European Stages



The Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy

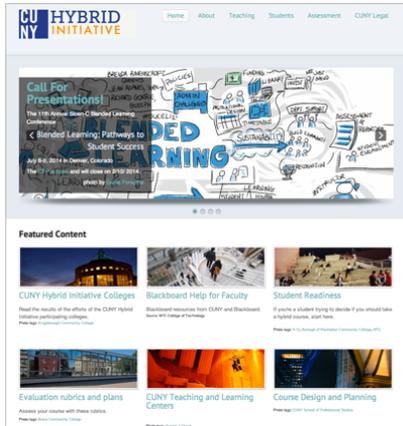


Theory, Research and Action in Urban Education



The Journal of American Drama and Theatera

# Cross-Campus and Campus-Based Initiatives on The Commons



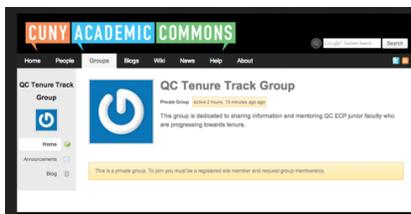
## CUNY Hybrid Initiative

The CUNY Hybrid Initiative is an open resource for professors who are new to online teaching and who are planning to create and teach hybrid courses, as well as experienced online professors wanting to refine their practice.



## Open Access @ CUNY

This site was created by a multi-campus team of CUNY library faculty interested in highlighting and advocating open access scholarship across the university. It holds resources, promotes discussion and events, and brings scholars together.



## Queens College Tenure Track Group

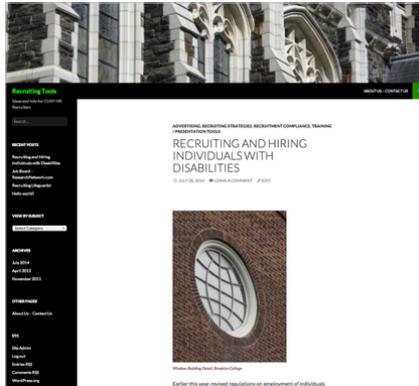
One of many private groups on the Commons, the Queens College Tenure Track group provides support and guidance to junior faculty in the Educational and Community Programs Department at Queens College.

## Blogs



### Orienting Statements

A music blog written by Dean S. Reynolds, a Ph.D. candidate in Ethnomusicology at the CUNY Graduate Center, Orienting Statements is just one of the newer blogs being added to our ever growing community.

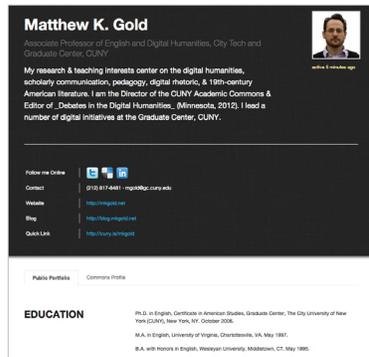


### Recruiting Tools

Multiple campuses at CUNY use the Recruiting Tools blog to share ideas and information with fellow CUNY HR Recruiters.

## Portfolios

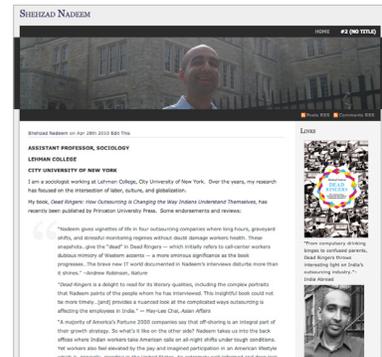
Each member of the CUNY Academic Commons receives a custom cuny.is shortlink to a profile page that presents an elegantly designed, professional identity. Many members of the Commons also create portfolio sites and blogs to share their work.



### Matthew K. Gold

<http://cuny.is/mkgold>

Elegant profile pages make it easy for members of the CUNY community to share their work and connect with others."

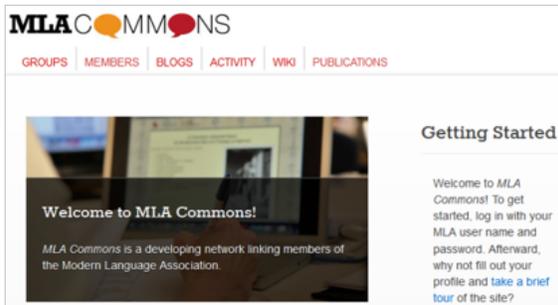


### Shehzad Nadeem

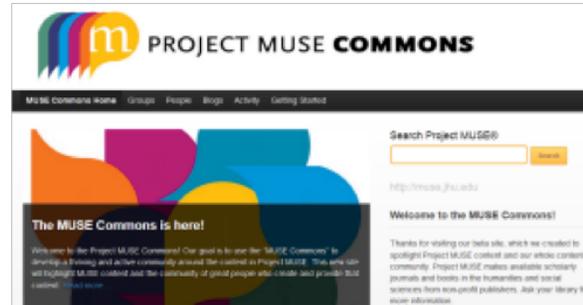
Shehzad Nadeem is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Lehman College who uses a Commons blog as a portfolio site.

## Commons in A Box

Created with the support of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Commons In A Box is a free, distributable, and easy-to-install package that takes the complexity out of creating a “Commons” site. First released in November 2012, Commons In A Box has been downloaded over 11,000 times, and is used by a wide variety of organizations, including colleges and universities, scholarly societies, and non-profits. In 2013, it won the best Digital Humanities Tool or Suite of Tools Award. The project regularly releases updates to its software and supports an active Help forum with nearly 500 registered members.



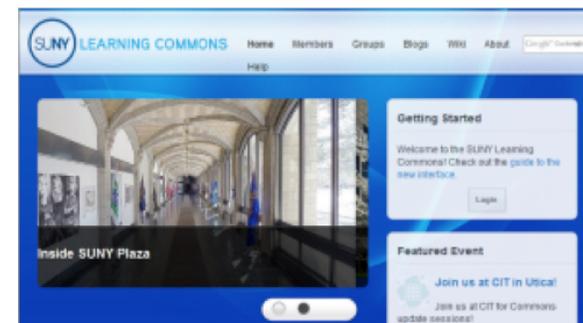
The Modern Language Society uses Commons in A Box to network its nearly 28,000 members and facilitate “new forms of scholarly communication and support scholars in creating, aggregating, editing, and evaluating academic writing online.” The MLA Commons also serves as a publishing platform for anthologies, journals and blogs.



ProjectMUSE Commons uses Commons in A Box “to develop a thriving and active community” around the journals and monographs found in ProjectMUSE and allows readers to “discuss articles and engage with the editors and other readers.”



New York City Digital Humanities (NYCDH) “brings together over 250 New York City scholars and members of the GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, museums) community to talk about, experiment with, collaborate on, teach and learn about, and just generally commune around the digital humanities.”



SUNY Learning Commons uses Commons in A Box to connect learners and educators across the State University of New York. Its aim is to foster collaboration, expose “learning opportunities,” form communities of interest, and “share and access resources, standards, policies, and best practices.”