



**ROBERT LAPINER, PH.D.**

*Retired, Professor of Higher Education and Dean Emeritus, School of Professional Studies, New York University*

Over a career of five decades that merged experience in teaching and research, along with executive leadership in higher education, international non-profit organizations, and the U.S. diplomatic corps, Robert has strived to expand educational opportunities, foster humanistic intellectual discovery, cross-cultural perspectives, and critical thinking, and promote international understanding and cooperation.

In Europe and Africa. In 1976, soon after earning his doctorate at Harvard and completing a few years of university teaching, he was appointed as a U.S. Foreign Service Officer in cultural, educational and press affairs. He served in The Netherlands, Democratic Republic of Congo (then Zaire) and France. (For his innovations as acting cultural attaché in the Congo, he received a Meritorious Service Award for Public Diplomacy.)

In 1982, he entered the private NGO sector, to become Director for Europe (and eventually one of two world-wide Deputy Executive Directors) of the non-profit organization, the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) and its commercial subsidiary Council Travel Services. Over eight years, he expanded the organizations' foothold to nine countries in Europe, enabling diverse services to more than 30,000 students, faculty, and college (and secondary school) administrators annually, as well as tailored ad hoc advisory and project support to many of the Council's nearly 300 member institutions.

During all of his nearly 15 years in Europe and Africa in different capacities, he worked closely with the Fulbright program in seven countries—including eight years as a USG-appointed private sector board member of the binational Franco-American Commission for Educational Exchange.

Back in the U.S. In 1990, he returned to American university life, becoming Dean of UCLA Continuing Education and University Extension, which comprised the largest single academic entity in the University of California system by headcount (enrolling about 35,000 individual adult learners each year) --while operating entirely on a self-supporting budgetary basis.

Robert's advocacy within regional, state, national, and international organizations fostered widely-adopted standards and methodologies for rigorous certificated post-baccalaureate study, along with what were then ground-breaking efforts to support continuing education faculty to incorporate the teaching of professional ethics, multicultural sensitivity, and global perspectives across all curricula. As the times required, Robert also became one of the crop of academic entrepreneurs in technology-assisted higher education, pioneering UCLA Extension's Online Learning capabilities (starting from zero, but leading to approximately 12,000 course enrollments by 2005).

Under his guidance, Extension became the largest vector for international enrollments at UCLA. And as an associate faculty member of the UCLA Center for Development Education, he personally facilitated intra-campus collaboration to apply faculty know-how to public service projects in the developing world.

In 2005, Robert became a New Yorker, appointed Dean and Professor of Higher Education and the Humanities at the NYU School of Professional Studies (SPS). During his six years at the helm, he was



credited for transformational strengthening of the academic standing of SPS, spearheading its position as one of the university's five largest—and most inclusive—among the 18 schools and colleges that make up NYU, and nurturing SPS's distinctive identity and faculty and student communities. Noteworthy achievements included timely new undergraduate and graduate degree programs, systemic incorporation of comparative global perspectives into the curricula, and (with vital support from generous donor-advocates) devising SPS's first-ever wholly dedicated campus classroom and administrative building—purchased and rebuilt on budget and on schedule.

From this record, in 2011, Robert was named university-wide Associate Vice Chancellor for Global Continuing Education, and undertook a two-year assignment developing a multi-pronged strategic plan for NYU's global network. And in 2013, fulfilling a personal desire to return to the classroom as a professor at SPS, he resumed full-time teaching, mentoring and service. He was soon selected as faculty Senator to the University Senate, where until his retirement in 2021, as an institutional citizen he served on (and also chaired) numerous NYU-wide advisory and ad hoc action-oriented committees.