# Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

# Joint Board of Overseers/Judges Panel Meeting

**Baldrige Performance Excellence Program ● National Institute of Standards and Technology**

**Thursday, June 17, 2021 ● via Videoconference**

## Attendees

*Overseers:* John Jasinski, Gerry Agnes, Lloyd Barker, Ray Floyd, Michael Garvey, Greg Gibson, Rand Jerris, Brian Lassiter, Jack Lynch, Theresa Meadows, Michelle Mejia, Janet Souter

*Judges:* Patricia Skriba, Keith Everett, Cary Hill, Kevin Johnson, Lynda Johnson, Amy Katschman, Christopher Laxton, Brigitta Mueller, Amy Pugh, Bruce Requa, Meridith Wentz, Gary Wilson

*NIST:* Jamie Ambrosi, Mojdeh Bahar, Dawn Bailey, Rebecca Bayless, Robert Fangmeyer, Robert Hunt, Elif Karakas, Darren Lowe, Jim Olthoff, Christine Schaefer, Robyn Verner, Kelly Welsh

*U.S.* *Department* *of* *Commerce:* Eric Osterman, Office of the General Counsel

*Guests:* Al Faber, Brian Lassiter, Stephanie Norling

## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

## John Jasinski called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. After introductions, Jim Olthoff, ADLP, Performing the Duties of NIST Director, National Institute of Standards and Technology, welcomed the overseers and spoke of the Baldrige Program’s (BPEP’s) “unique and powerful role” in helping organizations throughout the country improve performance, resilience, and long-term success. He also thanked leaders of BPEP partnership organizations. Mojdeh Bahar, Associate Director for Innovation and Industry Services, thanked all, referring to the Baldrige community of stakeholders as “truly a community rich with expertise and dedication.” Jasinski remarked on the group’s “critical role moving forward,” mentioning in particular the role of supporting equity and inclusion (a new theme in the 2021–2022 Baldrige Excellence Framework).

The minutes of the Board of Overseers’ December 2020 meeting were unanimously approved as presented.

## ISSUES FROM THE JUNE 16 JUDGES PANEL MEETING

Pattie Skriba reported that despite the past year’s groundbreaking, completely virtual judging cycle, “there was no decline in the quality of our product” or a decline in the quality of engagement and deliberation of the judges in the process. Key factors accounting for the virtual success were the adaptation and agility of the members to the virtual environment, effective process rules and timekeeping, and a focus on key outcomes.

## BALDRIGE PROGRAM UPDATE

## 2021 Baldrige Award Process

**Applications.** For 2021, BPEP received 14 applications: 0 manufacturing, 2 service, 0 small business, 4 nonprofit, 5 health care, and 3 education. Program Director Fangmeyer shared application trend data noting the 2012 eligibility rules change that drove down applications by pushing new users of the Baldrige framework to first engage with and receive a top-tier Baldrige-based award from an Alliance (state/regional) partner program and the increase in application fees in 2013.

**Application review.** This year, a new Results Call during the Independent Review of applications will provide applicants with opportunities to clarify any of the results that the team does not fully understand, as well as highlight select key results of importance to ensure a more effective evaluation.

**Site visits.** In 2020, 8 virtual site visits were held, with largely favorable feedback. The plan for 2021 is to build on what went well, especially in terms of electronic document submission and examiners working virtually with applicants on standard questions needing clarification or verification. A shorter site visit would then be scheduled, with a focus on assessing those things that are difficult to fully understand through virtual interactions such as deployment. Skriba noted that returning to in-person site visits is considered “ideal” due to loss in communications despite efficiencies gained through the virtual process.

## Examiner Training Shifted to Small Groups Online

Due to restrictions on travel and group meetings, examiner training featured online modules, self-study, small group sharing and calibration, and one-on-one coaching with Baldrige master examiners for new examiners. The learning management system Rise was an additional tool that was effective and well received. In a novel deployment opportunity, in 2021, national examiners not assigned to Independent Review teams will have an opportunity to use their assessment skills to support the Alliance for Performance Excellence or Communities of Excellence 2026 (COE) and receive credit for service as a national examiner.

## “Baldrige Examiner Training Experience” Back for 2021

While cancelled in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic, this service offering was reinstated in 2021, and every available spot was filled by 37 domestic applicants and 2 international applicants.

## First-Ever Virtual Quest for Excellence Conference

Virtual Quest featured the 2019 and 2020 Baldrige Award recipients sharing their best practices through more than 20 live and more than 80 on-demand sessions. Twelve former Baldrige Award recipients and the COE also participated. Quest 2022 is expected to be held in-person at the Gaylord National Harbor, April 3–6, 2022. This event is planned to feature an in-person Award Ceremony to recognize the 2019, 2020, and 2021 Baldrige Award recipients.

## Financial Update: Funding Opportunities

Through the American Jobs Plan, NIST could receive a major increase in funding, spread out over 5–10 years. This may provide opportunities for BPEP to achieve funding support, including investments in staff and technology solutions, allowing the program to increase its market penetration and educate more organizations about the Baldrige Excellence Framework and how its adoption will positively impact their performance. In response to a question on BPEP funding priorities, Fangmeyer said they are (1) workforce capability and capacity, (2) digital modernization of BPEP systems, processes, and offerings, and (3) support for the Baldrige enterprise. He reported that NIST has contributed two administrative staff positions through the Director’s office, as well as a discounted overhead rate. Bahar noted the need for further support.

## Fellows Program Stretches 2020 Cohort into 2021

The Baldrige Fellows met virtually in April, May, June, August, and October 2020, and again in January and February 2021. Feedback from several years of Fellows, plus several conversations with the 2020 Fellows, led to the decision to roll the 2020 cohort of Fellows into the 2021 cohort, ensuring the 2020 Fellows had the opportunity to “see excellence in action” as had all other cohorts.

## Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results

Results of the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey tend to demonstrate a consistent pattern when looking at comparisons: The Department of Commerce (DOC) outperforms the government average, NIST outperforms DOC, the Associate Directorship of Innovation and Industry Services (IIS) outperforms NIST, and BPEP outperforms IIS. Although BPEP does not have access to other NIST units’ results, it has been told many times that BPEP is the best performing work unit at NIST. Fangmeyer and Bahar confirmed that appears to be the case yet again with the 2020 results. Thirty-six of thirty-eight questions were considered key strengths for the Baldrige program. Fangmeyer remarked that they are working to address the two areas for improvement.

## Ethics Briefing

Eric Osterman delivered the ethics briefing for special government employees to the overseers and judges.

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

## Communities of Excellence 2026 Update

Stephanie Norling, Executive Director of Communities of Excellence 2026, noted that each year a couple of communities have the direct support of Baldrige Award recipients via backbone organizations (e.g., Ames, IA, and Mary Greeley) and a couple others have the support of organizations that use the Framework, but there is now growing interest in communities that do not have any direct Baldrige support. COE also has the support of Baldrige Award municipal recipients (e.g., Darin Atterbury from the City of Fort Collins is on the COE Board). However, Stephanie noted that limited staff and resources are not able to keep up with demand (e.g., for common metrics, comparative data, and collaborative leadership best practices). Brian Lassiter noted that the COE 2026 initiative is working with the Alliance and has the potential to grow the Enterprise by creating a new pipeline. Michelle Mejia commended the value of the COE to communities. COE 2026 is in the language that NIST submitted to DOC for authorization as a seventh Baldrige Award category.

## Advanced Manufacturing Assessment and Partnership with Manufacturing Extension Partnership

## BPEP is collaborating with two Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) programs (Florida Makes and the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center [IMEC]) and two Alliance for Performance Excellence programs (Florida Sterling and the Illinois Performance Excellence Program) to develop a Baldrige-based assessment specifically for manufacturers. This effort is being funded through a grant from NIST’s MEP program, and the objective is to create an online self-assessment tool for manufacturers that will provide them with immediate feedback on their readiness for and utilization of advanced manufacturing technologies. Pilots are expected to be run in the Fall in Florida and Illinois with 100 organizations, with full roll out next March. BPEP will check whether the pilots would be limited to those states and will also provide an update at the December meeting.

## Workforce Excellence Initiative to Continue

In 2020, DOC, in partnership with the Department of Labor and the White House, recognized nine outstanding organizations with the Pledge to America’s Presidential Award for excellence in workforce training and education. The latest evolution of the award will recognize organizations’ successful and measurable implementation of strategies that benefit employees, the organizations themselves, and their surrounding communities. Kelly Welsh said there is hope for an award in the future, provided there are resources to support the effort. Bob indicated that this is one more effort to give organizations an on-ramp or access point to the full Baldrige Framework.

## Revised Baldrige Award Process to Go Live in 2022

Based on the results of a redesign and pilots in 2018 and 2019, BPEP will implement a revised Baldrige Award process in 2022 that has four objectives: (1) maintain the integrity and rigor of the award process; (2) reduce the cycle time between application submission and receipt of feedback; (3) lean out the evaluation process to better utilize examiner resources and enhance value added to examiners and applicants; and (4) improve the timeliness, clarity, transparency, and overall quality of feedback to applicants. Lassiter indicated Alliance excitement for the new process, which will reduce the current process by 60–80 hours. Fangmeyer also noted streamlined work, such as comment writing and scoring being eliminated during Independent Review.

## West Coast University MBA Baldrige Internship Partnership Pilot

The new Dean of Business Administration Programs at West Coast University has proposed to pilot an internship program where its MBA students attend Baldrige Examiner training and serve on an examiner team. Participating in this partnership could help expose up-and-coming business leaders to the Baldrige Framework and award process; increase future examiner applications; and reach a younger demographic to serve as examiners. Potential risks to mitigate include any negative impact on examiner teams, the evaluation process, and feedback to applicants. Lassiter said he thinks some states (TX, MN) have or had internship programs. BPEP may need a blanket policy on whether the MBA students should participate in the whole process, in just the BETE program, or as assistants to the examiners.

## REPORT FROM THE BALDRIGE FOUNDATION

Al Faber talked about advocacy and the challenges with a transition in power at the Federal level, but things have gone well the past year. Baldrige is in the FY22 budget for $2.5 million. Al and Rand Jerris wrote a detailed message to the President to get his participation in the Award Ceremony and on overall support for the program. The Foundation is supporting COE in getting the approval of the seventh Award category. It is also working with CII on improving health care in India. The Foundation looks to Quest 2022 as a major fundraising opportunity, as well as the Mac Baldrige Society and Institute for Performance Excellence. Al asked the Overseers to let him know if they would like to submit articles for the *Chronicle of Leadership and Management* or white papers for the Institute. Al also said the Leadership Award applications are now open and asked for submissions. Regarding fundraising and the endowment, Al said they are ahead of schedule in terms of plans to create sustainable streams for the future.

## REPORT FROM THE ALLIANCE FOR PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE

As the feeder system for BPEP, the Alliance has 29 programs serving all 50 states and territories. In 2020, 652 applications were submitted, an increase overall but a decrease in full applications and top-tier awards; the number of small businesses and manufacturers mirrors that of the national program. For top-tier Alliance winners, both Lassiter and Fangmeyer reach out to congratulate and encourage them to apply at the national level. The Foundation also reaches out to members of Congress and governors from their states and adds them to a CEO email list to keep them informed. The Fall Conference in October 2021 will be fully virtual; the intent for 2022 is likely to be hybrid. Lassiter indicated that the COE is one of the newest Alliance members, and there are also non-award-program members. The Alliance is launching a new Marketing task group.

## NEW BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT

Ray Floyd commented that BPEP should form a committee to engage large American companies (particularly manufacturers) and attempt to get large, international organizations more involved; Mike Garvey, Cary Hill, Skriba, Amy Katchman, and Keith Everett said they would join the committee. Floyd said his personal concern is whether the Baldrige process is judging organizations on activities versus outcomes. Fangmeyer noted that assessing process as well as results is important to help people learn from role-model processes.

The overseers said they prefer an in-person meeting in December 2021.

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

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Gerry Agnes, Chair Candidate

Board of Overseers

8/??/2021