

Board of Overseers for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Wednesday, December 6, 2023
Meeting Minutes

Attendees

Overseers: Gerry Agnes, Angela Brandt, Ray Floyd, Brian Lassiter, Theresa Meadows, Michelle Mejia, Mathew Watson. Unable to attend: Greg Gibson, David Morales, Janet Souter

Special Guests: Al Faber, President and CEO, Baldrige Foundation; Stephanie Norling, Executive Director, Communities of Excellence 2026

NIST: Jamie Ambrosi, Mojdeh Bahar, Dawn Bailey, Rebecca Bayless, Jacqueline Deschamps, Mary Eastman, Robert Fangmeyer, Harry Hertz, Scott Kurtz, Darren Lowe, LouAnn Scott, Christine Schaefer, Kelly Welsh

Start: 11:00 am

Welcome and Introductions

Gerry Agnes, Bob Fangmeyer, and Mojdeh Bahar welcomed and thanked the overseers for their time and commitments. Agnes also noted that suggestions to fill vacant Board of Overseers positions, specifically executives from the service, manufacturing, and higher education sectors, are welcome.

Baldrige Program Update

Fangmeyer reported on recent Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (BPEP) activities as outlined below.

BPEP Purpose and Mission

To improve the performance and long-term success of businesses and other organizations by

- Recognizing role models, and
- Fostering the adoption of proven leadership, management, and operational practices

The practices that drive organizational success have evolved over time, and the program has evolved to help improve the performance and long-term success of businesses and other organizations in the US to improve our economy and quality of life.

BPEP 2023 Highlights

- Baldrige Excellence Frameworks were revised based on input from over 100 contributors, representing all key sectors and stakeholder groups. The 2023/2024 Business/Nonprofit version was made available in December of 2022 and the Health Care and Education versions were made available in January 2023.
- The Baldrige Executive Fellows program continues to attract leaders from healthcare, business, nonprofit, and government who wish to learn from Baldrige Award recipient senior executives and who wish to strengthen their professional network. Net Promoter Score (NPS) for the Fellows program is consistently exceptional, scoring above 80 every year.

- 34th Quest for Excellence® Conference was the first ever without any new award recipients to highlight due to the mandated pause on the award process for 2022. Despite that, attendance was relatively strong and the feedback from attendees was very positive, other than the lack of new award recipients. NPS for Quest was 60, still exceeding the benchmark for excellence of 50.
- Job Quality Toolkit (JQT) (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/self-assessing/improvement-tools/job-quality-toolkit>). BPEP continues to partner with the Department of Commerce to promote the use of the JQT which identifies strategies and actions to improve the eight drivers of job quality, enhancing the ability to recruit and retain a high performing workforce. Project lead Kelly Welsh noted that BPEP collaborated with America Works, part of the MEP National Network, to create an online JQT assessment: <https://www.jobquality.org/> which will be moved to the BPEP website in the coming months.
- BPEP continues to foster strategic collaboration within NIST, MEP, and the MEP National Network to enhance the program's reach and impact, particularly in manufacturing.
- Despite very limited resources, BPEP continues to focus on outreach and communication, leveraging email, website, social media, and partner organizations to spread awareness and interest in Baldrige.

Looking Ahead to 2024

- On June 11, 2023 NIST and DOC approved BPEP's Baldrige Reimagined proposal. Since that time redesigning and recreating the award process and all associated processes has been the top priority.
- The 35th Quest for Excellence® Conference will be April 7-10, 2024. BPEP will be leaning into resilience and long term success and will be recruiting additional speakers and attendees from manufacturing.
- The Baldrige Cybersecurity Excellence Builder is slated to go through a revision process based on changes to the NIST Cybersecurity Framework and changes to the Baldrige Excellence Framework.
- The Overseers were asked for comments on the draft Brand Story for Baldrige:

We make lives better, one person, one organization, one community at a time. Our proven model enables you to learn from the best and thrive.

Organizations face many challenges, ranging from finding and retaining talent to disruptions caused by technology, competitors, and even global pandemics. You need a trusted and proven partner to help navigate these challenges and achieve your vision and strategy. A partner with a track record of excellence and an eye towards resilience and long-term success.

Baldrige is here for you.

For over 35 years, we have recognized roles models, shared best practices, and helped thousands of organizations get better and thrive.

Their success stories can become your story. Get started today!

The Overseers expressed support for the brand story, offering some minor edits to the language.

Following a brief review of BPEP's key roles, responsibilities, programs, and offerings, the Overseers noted that a prioritization of tasks may need to happen in order to effectively roll out the new award process.

Baldrige Reimagined

Fangmeyer provided an update on the Baldrige Reimagined effort, starting with a review of the 2022/2023 external review and its recommendations for the program and award, which were grouped into 4 areas:

1. Return to Relevance
2. Transform the Award
3. Simplify and Enhance Accessibility
4. Strengthen the Baldrige Enterprise

There is a paradigm shift away from an award process that begins as an organization-wide assessment of everything that is important to the organization's success; instead BPEP is focusing the award on identifying role models of resilience and long-term success. However, it was noted that the Baldrige Excellence Framework is still the primary tool organizations should use to achieve role-model levels of performance.

Key changes to the award process are:

1. The award evaluation process will build on our legacy of quality and performance excellence while creating a focus on identifying role models of resilience and long-term success.
2. Barriers to participation will be reduced as far as practical, balancing the need for a rigorous, objective, effective evaluation as well as the need for revenues to cover associated costs.
3. Streamlined award criteria and evaluation rubric tailored to only assess what is essential to identify role models. While having effective processes remains important, the award criteria put greater emphasis on results and outcomes achieved.
4. A new online award application platform to capture applicant responses to the streamlined criteria, eliminating the need to prepare and submit a well-crafted 50+ page application.
5. Each application will be reviewed by 5 subject matter expert volunteer examiners. Each examiner will perform an independent analysis prior to the examiners working together to come to a consensus opinion for every element of the evaluation.
6. The Judges Panel will review blinded evaluation data for all of the applicant organizations to determine which move on to the site visit phase as a finalist for the award.
7. Site visits will be hybrid, incorporating virtual meetings as well as a shortened in-person phase.
8. In addition, the program will leverage existing industry recognitions as a pre-screen to create a "fast-track" for proven high performing, industry leading businesses. Those that meet the prescreen and initial vetting, will be invited to participate in the award process as a finalist for the award, and beginning at the site visit phase. Prescreened organizations will be required to complete parts of the application and go through the same site visit and judging processes as award applicants.

9. Finally, the new award process will have more opportunities for an organization to enhance its brand by increasing the types of recognition.
 - a. Recognize all organizations that earn a site visit as finalists for the award.
 - b. Provide special recognition to award finalists that are having significant impact in areas of importance to them or to the nation.

Fangmeyer noted the importance of working with the Alliance for Performance Excellence and Communities of Excellence 2026 to ensure strong alignment and to redesign and reestablish the pathway and pipeline from their recognitions to the national award.

He also shared the following quote from Dr. Laurie E. Locascio, Undersecretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and NIST Director:

“We are fully supportive of the changes and look forward to a new class of Baldrige Award recipients in 2024. NIST and the Department of Commerce appreciate the robustness of the external review, the engaged and constructive participation of the Baldrige community, and the thoughtfulness of the Baldrige Program’s proposal to address the recommendations. I am excited for the work and opportunities ahead of us.”

Recommendations

The Overseers expressed their support for the changes to the process and changes to the award process fee schedule, and made the following recommendations:

For BPEP

- Avoid any potential perception of politicization of the award process, in particular, it must be made clear why the pre-screened organizations are deserving of being advanced to site visit, and that they will go through the same site visit and judging processes as the normal applicants.

For NIST and DOC

- As noted in the final report from the external review, effective implementation of Baldrige Reimagined requires significant investment in the Baldrige Program. To date, BPEP has been doing the best they can with only their existing resources. Providing resources to help lower barriers, enable the development and distribution of readily accessible and technology enhanced offerings, enhance outreach and promotion, and to create new and improved partnerships and collaborations, is crucial to the success of the entire Baldrige Reimagined effort to increase the reach and impact of Baldrige.
- BPEP needs NIST/DOC support for and participation in promotion, outreach, and marketing to encourage organizations to participate in the award process, especially in manufacturing, service, and small business sectors. A video from the Secretary expressing her support and encouragement would be very helpful.
- Demonstrate support for BPEP partners through messaging and promotion of Baldrige that incorporates reference to the Alliance, COE, and the Foundation
- Support and help recruit high level executives as members for Board of Overseers.

Foundation for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

Al Faber provided an update on the Foundation’s efforts to create more awareness of, interest in, and support for the Baldrige program, including efforts to increase bi-partisan support in Congress to protect and grow the Baldrige appropriation.

- The Foundation’s Leadership Awards recognize leaders from every sector of the economy and are effective at introducing outsiders to Baldrige and the Baldrige Community as well as building support within. The number of awards continues to increase, and in 2022, the Foundation recognized Congressman Robert Aderholt of Alabama.
- Fundraising efforts continue on a daily basis, but it was noted that some organizations are waiting to see what comes next for the Baldrige Program before they will be willing to invest.
- The Institute for Performance Excellence continues to grow, and people participate in their training programs on a regular basis. Over 400 certification programs are available through the Institute. Southcentral Foundation was brought on as the most recent Institute trustee in 2023.
- The third edition of the *Chronicle of Leadership and Management* will soon be released and can be found in the Library of Congress.
- The Foundation is strengthening its connection with American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) which has asked the Foundation to lead an invitation-only CEO roundtable during their annual conference again in 2024.
- The Foundation will once again manage sponsorships for the Quest for Excellence conference and will also seek sponsorships for the Baldrige Fall Conference.
- The Foundation is still supporting Communities of Excellence 2026 (COE) through providing administrative and bookkeeping support, sponsoring the new framework, and highlighting COE in their quarterly webinars and other materials and publications.
- Internationally, the Foundation is strengthening relationships with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII); the Indian conglomerate Tata and Sons Limited; and speaking at various events. A number of international organizations have reached out, including the King Abdullah II Center for Excellence in the country of Jordan.

Communities of Excellence 2026 (COE)

Stephanie Norling provided an update COE’s efforts to improve the performance of communities and the people who lead and live in them, noting the following:

- COE exists to ensure that every person in America has the opportunity to live their best life in communities that are thriving. Its envisioned future is that communities that adopt the Baldrige-based Communities of Excellence Framework are recognized as the top-performing in the nation and are catalysts for our country to again lead the world in educational attainment, economic prosperity, health and wellness, and quality of life.
- The National Learning Collaborative, COE’s flagship product, is moving into its seventh year. Twenty six communities in sixteen states are actively participating, representing over 11 million residents.
- COE’s 2023-2024 assessment program brought in 12 applications, with 2 bronze and 2 silver recipients. Over 100 volunteers participated. Four Alliance programs were involved.
- COE held its annual conference in conjunction with the Baldrige Fall Conference and in collaboration with the Alliance. COE had 75 participants and some of its highest ratings to date. As part of the conference, community leaders presented on promising practices.
- The Communities of Excellence Framework was revised over a six-month period. The revision process included alignment to the 2023/2024 Baldrige Excellence Framework, input from over 100 individuals, two focus group webinars, and review by an Equity Task Force of six national DEIA leaders.

- COE has done a lot of work on its own governance, including installing Angela Brandt, who also serves on the Board of Overseers, as Vice-Chair. Three new board members were also welcomed in 2023: Duane Reynolds, Lindsey Alexander, and Nick Macchione.
- There has been significant international interest in COE, including from Saudi Arabia, Japan, and China. The Japan Productivity Center has been working with Stephanie for the last 1.5 years in building a COE program in Japan, where they are experiencing an aging population and population decline outside of major cities.
- COE is getting ready to launch a new membership program. Norling said that fund development is critical to their ability to develop and deploy new ideas and offerings.
- As the year 2026 approaches, COE will need to reconsider its name and is actively working with a trademark attorney.

The Alliance for Performance Excellence (Alliance)

Chair of the Alliance and member of the Board of Overseers, Brian Lassiter, provided an update on key Alliance initiatives as follows:

The Alliance continues its visioning exercises and has established the following key elements:

- **Purpose:** To inspire individuals, organizations, and communities across the U.S. and the world to learn, implement, and achieve performance excellence. He said this purpose has helped the Alliance make some key decisions.
- **Mission:** To strengthen members through training, mentoring, collaboration, and sharing of resources, best practices, and service offerings.
- **Vision:** To be the premier resource for a thriving Baldrige community.

The exercises have helped with rules of engagement across programs and with customers, enhancing accountability, and decision making. The Alliance is also exploring its core values and culture. Customer segmentation, consistency of products and services, and the need for creativity and innovation are also under consideration. The Alliance is also working on its own Organizational Profile.

A transformation committee task force of Alliance members is collaborating with BPEP on Baldrige Re-Imagined effort, some of whom are working directly with BPEP teams.

The Baldrige Fall Conference was a success—94% satisfaction, 74% top-box, very satisfied, and a Net Promoter Score of 60—but attendance was down. There will be an online, encore presentation of the plenary sessions on January 23, 2024.

In addition, Lassiter shared that the Alliance will be exploring other strategic changes in 2024

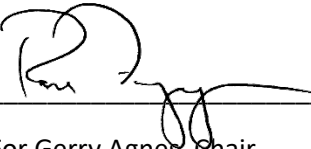
- Strengthening its infrastructure to include hiring staff and creating the Alliance University for members to share resources, best practices, and training.
- Exploring a rebrand, website revisions, and shared marketing collateral to ensure appropriate alignment to the national program.
- Member program changes include a new Executive Director, Bob Mitchell, for the Southwest Alliance for Excellence; the Maryland program remains in transition and will be covered by

programs of surrounding states; The Iowa program is now partnering with the Minnesota program; and Anne Warner, from Excellence North Alliance is retiring.

NEW BUSINESS

None

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.



For Gerry Agnes, Chair