# Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

# Joint Board of Overseers/Judges Panel Meeting

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

**Thursday, June 11, 2020 ● via Videoconference**

## Attendees

*Overseers:* Gerry Agnes, Lloyd Barker, Deborah Bowen, Bennie Fowler, Michael Garvey (candidate), Gregory Gibson (candidate), John Jasinski, Randon Jerris, Theresa Meadows, Elizabeth Menzer, Janet Souter (candidate). *Not present:* Jack Lynch.

*Judges:* Allison Carter, Glenn Crotty, Kevin Johnson, Amy Katschman, Christopher Laxton, Kevin McManus, Brigitta Mueller, Bruce Requa, Patricia Skriba, JoAnn Sternke, Meridith Wentz, Gary Wilson.

*NIST:* Jamie Ambrosi, Mojdeh Bahar, Dawn Bailey, Rebecca Bayless, Walter Copan, Jacqueline DesChamps, Robert Fangmeyer, Barbara Fischer, Ellen Garshick, Robert Hunt, Darren Lowe, Christine Schaefer, Robyn Verner.

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

*Guests:* Al Faber, President and CEO,Foundation for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award; Stephanie Norling, Communities of Excellence 2026, Brian Lassiter, Chair, Alliance for Performance Excellence

## Welcome and Introductions

Deborah Bowen, chair of the Board of Overseers, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. After introductions, Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and NIST Director Walter Copan greeted the attendees and thanked the judges and overseers for their work on performance excellence, noting the important role Baldrige plays at NIST and in the nation. He introduced recently appointed Associate Director for Innovation and Industry Services Mojdeh Bahar, who expressed her delight to be at NIST and be involved with the Baldrige Program.

The minutes of the Board of Overseers’ December 2019 meeting were unanimously approved as presented.

## Issues from the June 10 Judges Panel Meeting

Chair of the Judges Panel Allison Carter reported that the judges had made several minor changes to their process to increase efficiency and maintain effectiveness, as well as discussing the impacts to the 2020 Baldrige Award process of the COVID-19 pandemic. She noted that the participants found the meeting—the first Judges Panel meeting held virtually—productive and engaging. She also emphasized the judges’ confidence that the Baldrige staff and the judges were prepared to address any pandemic-related challenges that may arise during the award process. In particular, she said that the judges were confident that the program could carry out effective virtual site visits if necessary.

## Baldrige Program Update

Baldrige Program Director Robert Fangmeyer reviewed steps taken by the Baldrige Program in spring 2020 to inform decisions about the 2020 Baldrige Award process related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including obtaining feedback from award recipients, potential applicants, examiners, and other stakeholders. He outlined the subsequent cancellation of the Quest for Excellence Conference and postponement of the Baldrige Award ceremony, as well as changes to the Baldrige Award process and examiner training. He also noted that planning and benchmarking were underway for moving site visits to a virtual format in 2020, if necessary, as well as for modifying the Baldrige Executive Fellows Program and the 2021 Quest for Excellence Conference and award ceremony in response to pandemic-related restrictions. Fangmeyer said that these cancellations and changes could result in significant revenue loss to the program, but that reserves of earned income and support from NIST’s CARES Act funding are expected to cover the lost revenue.

The overseers commended the program for its agility in contingency planning and asked the program to carefully consider health and safety risks, as well as the fear factor among potential participants in events, in its decisions. They also gave their full support to the program’s plans to carry out virtual site visits, asking the program to continue to benchmark and explore all the issues covered in on-site visits, and offering additional benchmarking opportunities. In addition, in response to changes to examiner training, the overseers asked the program to consider the effect of virtual events on examiner knowledge and engagement.

## Ethics Briefing

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

## Report from Communities of Excellence (COE) 2026

Stephanie Norling, director of COE 2026, reminded the overseers that in June 2018 they had agreed to (1) endorse and support the effort to have Congress approve Community as the seventh Baldrige Award category; (2) support the five-year plan presented, concluding with a viable award program in 2023; and (3) work with COE 2026 and other members of the Baldrige Enterprise to achieve Congressional approval, acquire necessary funding, and implement the five-year plan. She reported the following areas of progress: the seventh category authorization has gone to Congress, but no action has been taken yet; the COE Learning Collaborative has expanded to 18 communities; and the assessment and recognition program now involves several Alliance programs. She also outlined COE 2026’s goals for 2020–2021.

The overseers applauded the success and growth of the COE effort. They asked about evidence that the use of the COE framework has led to improved results for the communities, as this would be necessary for role-model status. Norling stated that there is a growing recognition that communities are benefiting from the initiative, adding that in response to the COVID-19 crisis, communities were using the knowledge and skills gained to address the crisis; many outcome results relate to long-term measures. The overseers noted that, in addition, evidence of improved outcomes in areas important to the communities will be necessary to promote the value of the COE framework.

## Award Process Redesign

Fangmeyer reviewed the goals of the redesign of the Baldrige Award process to be implemented in 2021, as well as progress so far. He noted that the program is currently modifying all affected processes and materials. He pointed out an unexpected challenge: the need to complete modifications while making just-in-time changes to the current process to deal with the impact of the pandemic.

The overseers asked whether the program had a master schedule for the modification and whether milestones were being met. Fangmeyer said that the program anticipates being able to meet all milestones.

## Pledge to America’s Workforce Presidential Award.

Fangmeyer explained that program was managing this award at the request of and in collaboration with the Commerce Department, the Department of Labor, and the White House in response to two presidential executive orders. NIST has detailed Kelly Welsh to the program to manage the process. Award criteria have been drafted, applications will be accepted in July, and recipients will be announced in September. Fangmeyer emphasized that the award will not be branded as a Baldrige Award, although the criteria are Baldrige-based. He also pointed out the opportunity to leverage the award to engage manufacturing, service, and other organizations and to highlight winners during conferences and in communications.

The overseers remarked that the award aligns with a vital national issue, and they asked whether the award appears to be sustainable past 2020. Kelly Welsh said that there appears to be an appetite among companies around addressing the nation’s workforce development issues; at present, the award is scheduled to be offered every other year. She also noted that the Department of Commerce and the White House are taking the lead on the award ceremony and communications.

## Baldrige Foundation

Baldrige Foundation President and CEO Al Faber thanked the overseers for their support. He reported that the Foundation was on track to exceed its fundraising goals in 2020. He also announced a partnership with private companies to offer a CARES Act grant-writing solution. Faber detailed advocacy and fundraising efforts and described the new Institute for Performance Excellence, which provides training and publishes white papers and peer-reviewed articles, both new and previously published.

The overseers thanked Faber for leading the Foundation’s efforts to support the Baldrige Program.

## Report from the Alliance for Performance Excellence

Elizabeth Menzer reported on the Alliance for Performance, which she described as a national network of Baldrige-based programs. She reviewed its mission and vision, and noted its collaboration with the Baldrige Enterprise. She described the Alliance’s efforts to modify the Baldrige Fall Conference to virtual or partly virtual in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. She also reported on plans for the 2021 conference in El Paso, Texas. Menzer then summarized the Alliance’s current focus areas: (1) guidelines for lower level applications, (2) partnership with Communities of Excellence, (3) sustaining the Army Communities of Excellence, and (4) marketing. She also shared statistics on Alliance programs, applications, examiners, and award recipients.

The overseers pointed out that in the current environment, organizations will need the Alliance programs, and they thanked Menzer for her report.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

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

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Deborah Bowen

Chair

Board of Overseers

x/xx/2020