

## **Strengthening the Employment Arbitrator Profession: Connecting Research, Policy, and Practice**

### **Session Abstract:**

This session will bring together panelists from the academic and practitioner communities to discuss the current state of the employment arbitrator profession and explore ways in which this important community of neutrals can be strengthened. The panel will seek to connect the perspectives of researchers, practicing employment arbitrators, and administering organizations that provide arbitration services. That panel will begin with presentation by Colvin of findings from a large-scale survey being conducted of employment arbitrators. Other panelists will both comment on the research findings and contribute their own thoughts and perspectives on how best to strengthen the employment arbitrator profession.

### **Session Description:**

Employment arbitration has become established as an important new process for employment dispute resolution. As with other alternative dispute resolution procedures, the successes or failures of employment arbitration will depend to a large degree on the strengths or weaknesses of the third party neutrals who decide the cases. Whereas there is a long-standing community of professional labor arbitrators who resolve disputes in unionized workplaces, the profession of employment arbitrator is of much more recent origin and still emerging as a professional field. This panel will seek to better understand the state of this important developing professional community and discuss ways to strengthen the employment arbitrator profession.

This session is intended to connect together research, policy, and practice in addressing the issue of how to strengthen the employment arbitrator profession. The panel participants will be from a range of different perspectives, including an academic researcher (Colvin), a practicing employment arbitrator (Fincher), and a leader from the largest arbitration service provider organization (Christine Newhall, American Arbitration Association). Colvin will begin the session by presenting results from a new large-scale survey of employment arbitrators that he is conducting with the sponsorship of the National Academy of Arbitrators'™ Research and Education Fund. Fincher and Newhall will then both comment on the research findings and provide their own perspectives and insights on how best to strengthen the employment arbitrator profession. The session will then open up to a more general discussion among the panel and the audience of these issues.