Symposium Highlights

The picturesque and historic city of New Orleans welcomed benefits professionals from across North America in September for 2½ days of timely educational content, networking and more. More than 600 attendees learned the latest information on group health and retirement plans, employee communication strategies, benefit plan cybersecurity, paid leave, telemedicine, retirement readiness planning, and legal and legislative updates.

Other timely and critical topics included mindfulness in the workplace; behavioral economics; business ethics; the impact of diversity, equity and inclusion; unlimited vacation policies; implementing a student loan assistance benefit; and much more.

Connections can be critical in getting things done and moving your career forward, and the Symposium has long been known as the event to meet the best in the business. With opportunities including the luncheon roundtables, receptions, meals and session breaks, attendees found time to connect over common interests and goals and to share ideas, challenges and best practices. A variety of open discussion forums on health care, retirement and Canadian benefits provided a space to unpack challenges and questions as well as ideas sparked by earlier sessions.

Those attending Symposium for the first time were invited to a meet-and-greet luncheon on Sunday afternoon. Hosted by Governing Council officers Sam Henson, CEBS, Carey Wooton, CEBS, and Ryan Siemers, CEBS, the event served as a preview to the conference and included introductions, icebreakers, an overview of each day’s events, and tips to maximize the available resources, amenities and networking opportunities.

A special thank-you goes out to the loyal attendees who consider this event a can’t-miss-it component of their professional development. Among the attendees were nearly 200 first-time attendees, who were welcomed at a special meet-and-greet luncheon on Sunday, and 80 new CEBS graduates, GBA and RPA designees, and first-time ISCEBS Fellows whose accomplishments were recognized at a conferment ceremony on Sunday evening.

Along with a packed education agenda, attendees found plenty to do and see in their downtime. Many thanks to the New Orleans–area Society members who coordinated sightseeing tours, sign-and-dine evenings and other activities. Attendees also took advantage of fitness opportunities, including chair yoga, the morning power walk/run and a daily step challenge that boasted totals on Twitter with #SympStepChallenge.

The Symposium received an excellent overall rating of 9.0, and 95% of attendees said the conference met or exceeded their needs.

Year after year, the Symposium continues to provide the education, solutions and networking that make it the best event for benefits experts to learn, share and connect. Mark your calendar and make plans to join us next year, August 23-26 in San Diego, California.
2019 International Foundation President and Chair Gene Price addresses the graduates and acknowledges the diverse paths that can lead to an employee benefits career.

During his conferment address, Wayne Murphy, CEBS, encourages all graduates and designees to educate others about the value of the CEBS designation.