

NUPOC NEWS

The official newsletter of the
Northwestern University Prosthetics-Orthotics Center



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Student Success

Hittenberger Scholarship

Kendal Coldren (MPO 26) is the recipient of this year's Hittenberger Scholarship following a highly competitive application cycle. She will receive a \$5,000 award in recognition of her academic excellence and commitment to the O&P profession.

Fuel the Future Scholarship

Two of the five national \$20,000 O&P Foundation Fuel the Future Scholarships were awarded to NUPOC students: **Mariam El-Khatib** and **Elizabeth Ibata-Arens** (MPO 26). Congratulations to both on this exceptional honor.

Mentored Research Pilot Grant

Maria T. Gamez (MPO-R 26) received the O&P Foundation Fall 2025 Mentored Research Pilot Grant, a \$5,000 award supporting her project on lower limb proprioception and post-stroke gait and balance, under the mentorship of Russell T. Johnson, PhD.

Hanger Foundation Scholarship

Katelynn Graves (MPO 27) was selected as NUPOC's recommendation for the Hanger Foundation Scholarship, which includes \$20,000 in tuition support, professional mentorship, a paid residency, and potential participation in Hanger Live.

Dean's Reception Honorees

At the Feinberg Dean's Reception, NUPOC students were recognized across multiple categories:

- Distinguished NUPOC Student Award: **Mariam El-Khatib** (MPO 26)
- Peer Advocate Award: **Grace Holzman** (MPO 26), **Christian Maron** (MPO 26)
- Emerging Young Professional Award: **Owen Albrecht** (MPO-R 26), **Mariam El-Khatib** (MPO 26), **Reece McElfresh** (MPO 26)

Faculty & Staff Achievements

We are pleased to highlight a significant achievement within the NUPOC community. **Dr. Steven Gard** has been awarded a 5-year VA Research Career Scientist (RCS) Award, one of the highest honors granted by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to non-clinician investigators. His award will run from 2026 to 2030.

The VA RCS Program recognizes exceptional scientists who have demonstrated sustained commitment to advancing research that directly supports the health and well-being of Veterans. Recipients are selected based on their long-term scientific productivity, leadership in research initiatives, service on committees, mentorship of trainees, and stewardship of shared research resources. The award provides dedicated career and salary support, enabling recipients to continue driving impactful, mission-aligned research within the VA system.

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Gard on this prestigious recognition and in celebrating his continued commitment to research, excellence, and service to the Veteran community.



Pictured: **Dr. Steven Gard**

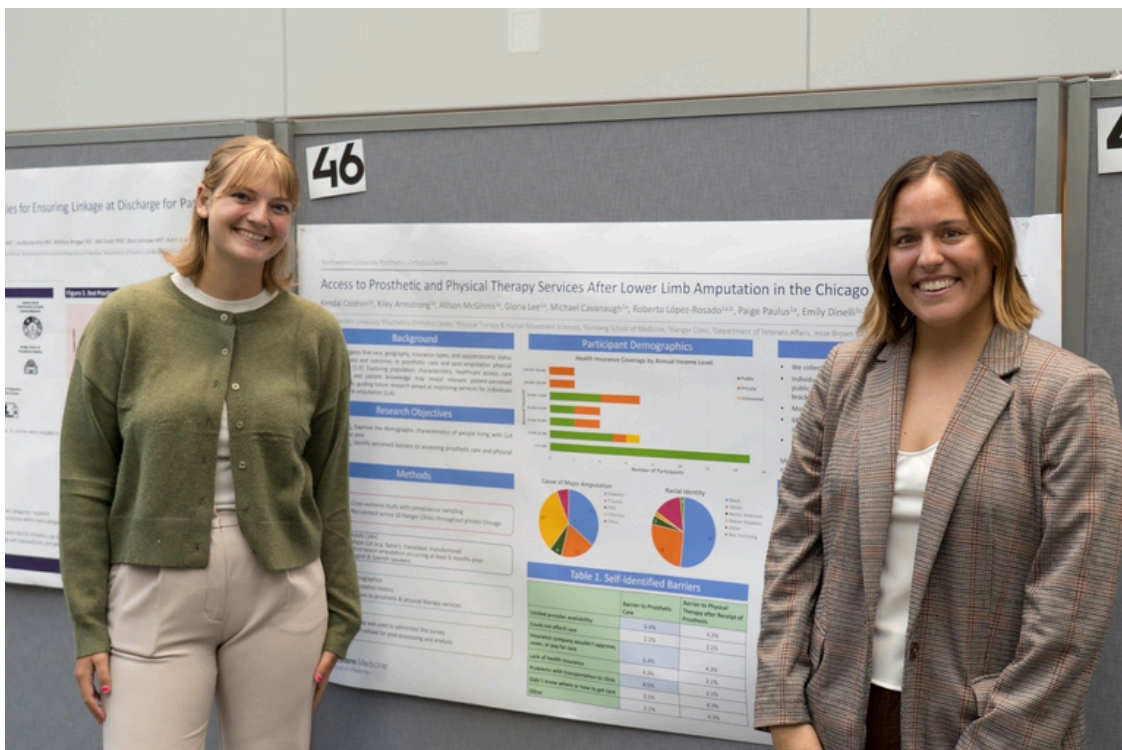
Faculty & Staff Achievements

Kiley Armstrong and **Kendal Coldren** Present at the 2025 Health Equity Research Symposium

We are proud to share that **Kiley Armstrong**, MS, MPO, CPO, and **Kendal Coldren**, MPO 26, presented their poster, “*Access to Prosthetic and Physical Therapy Services After Lower Limb Amputation in the Chicago Metropolitan Area*,” at the 2025 Health Equity Research Symposium.

Their study highlights key barriers individuals face when seeking rehabilitation services after major lower limb amputation, including transportation challenges, limited provider availability, and insurance constraints. By identifying these obstacles, their work aims to inform future efforts to improve equitable access to prosthetic and physical therapy care across the region.

This project was a collaborative effort with contributions from **Allison McGinnis, Gloria Lee, Michael Cavanaugh, Roberto López-Rosado, Paige Paulus, Emily Dinelli, Thomas O'Doherty, and Dr. Steven Gard.**



Pictured from left to right: **Kendal Coldren** and **Kiley Armstrong**

Upcoming Course:

Prosthetics-Orthotics for

Physicians & Therapists

April 13–16, 2026

NUPOC will host Prosthetics-Orthotics for Physicians & Therapists, a four-day course designed to strengthen interdisciplinary knowledge in orthotic and prosthetic care. Through lectures and hands-on clinical sessions with actual patients, participants will review key pathologies, assessment strategies, prescription development, and biomechanics across upper and lower limb prosthetics and orthotics. An extensive digital course manual is included. Register here: <https://bit.ly/nupoc-op725-reg-form>

Topics include:

- Pre- and post-amputation care
- Normal and pathologic gait
- Upper limb, partial foot, transtibial, transfemoral, and hip-level prosthetic management
- Pedorthic considerations
- AFO/KAFO orthoses
- Orthotic management of spinal pathologies



Pictured: Prosthetics-Orthotics for Physicians & Therapists 2025

MOBIUS: NUPOC's New Movement Biomechanics Lab

NUPOC is proud to introduce **MOBIUS**: the **MO**vement **BI**omechanics **U**nit for rehabilitation **S**cience, our newly built space for advanced gait and mobility research.

At its core is an immersive Virtual-Reality/Augmented-Reality split-belt treadmill system equipped with force plates, an overhead safety harness, and the ability to deliver multi-planar disturbances such as trips, slips, and lateral shifts. The system can simulate various environments, from city streets to castle walls, and directly simulate the effects of obstacles and targets on the treadmill belts. These features support both gait training and long-duration walking tests, enabling detailed studies of movement patterns across time.

The lab also includes eight high-speed optical motion-capture cameras for precise 3D tracking, as well as a configurable obstacle course with uneven terrain, stairs, and ramps for testing prosthetic and orthotic devices in realistic conditions.



MPO-R 2026 Students and Faculty in MOBIUS. Pictured from left to right: **Matthew Major**, PhD, **Christian Maron** (MPO-R 26), **Elizabeth Ibata-Arens** (MPO-R 26), **Russell T Johnson**, PhD, **Elyssia Wellington** (MPO-R 26), **Maria Gamez** (MPO-R 26), and **Owen Albrecht** (MPO-R 26)

Giving Opportunities

Donor support is essential to our continued success. Your gift can help support emerging researchers, P&O clinicians, and programs that will improve the lives of people who live with amputation or other physical impairments.

Contribute [online](#). Or contact FSM Development (T: 312-503-2706)

NUPOC appreciates your generosity!

Alumni Form

Scan the QR code to update your alumni contact information and stay connected with NUPOC



[NUPOC O&P School Alumni Contact Form – Fill out form](#)

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