

## Personal Statement

Naveen K. Karthik

I aspire to pursue an academic career as a retina specialist, where I can combine my interests in patient care, medical education leadership, and retinal imaging research. I first became interested in ophthalmology and retinal imaging research during my gap year before medical school. I worked in a uveitis imaging lab with Drs. Sunil Srivastava and Sumit Sharma at the Cole Eye Institute. During this year, I investigated the use of imaging technologies as biomarkers of disease in patients with retinal and uveitic conditions. I continued this work into medical school and developed an even stronger interest in the field. During my ophthalmology residency at Duke, I sought further opportunities in imaging research. I collaborated with Dr. Sharon Fekrat on projects involving imaging outcomes in patients with neurodegenerative conditions, including traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. I also continued my interest in uveitis research with Dr. Dilraj Grewal. Together, we pursued projects analyzing imaging findings in patients with IgG4-related disease and autoimmune retinopathy. I aim to continue retinal and uveitis imaging research throughout my career, with a specific focus on using imaging features for timely disease identification and the personalization of medical and surgical care for patients.

Medical education has also been a passion of mine since the beginning of medical school. I was actively involved in our local student-run health clinic as a medical student and also served as outreach committee co-chair. In this position, I helped create initiatives to educate our community about vision-related conditions. I also developed an interest in curriculum development and led a study with our school's Academic Dean to determine the curricular and non-curricular factors essential to specialty choice. I continued my interest in medical education during ophthalmology residency. As a first-year ophthalmology resident, I was selected for the Duke Medical Education Leadership Track. In this program, I learned how to effectively teach and mentor trainees and applied these skills while teaching junior residents and medical students. Because of my commitment to medical education, I was selected as an incoming co-chief resident in our program to lead curricular development and teaching for our residents. I strive to dedicate my career to teaching trainees, with the goal of becoming actively involved in residency and fellowship programs.

I would greatly value the opportunity to connect with current leaders in academic ophthalmology during the Heed Ophthalmic Foundation Resident Retreat. Given my interests in education, I would be grateful to discuss and exchange ideas on curriculum development, medical education leadership, and mentorship with faculty who are deeply experienced in education. I also aspire to pursue clinical imaging research and trials and would be thrilled to learn how faculty balance clinical responsibilities with research projects, collaborate with other departments, and secure the funding necessary to produce high-quality research. The experience at the Heed Resident Retreat would be invaluable in my journey toward a fulfilling academic career.