

Jessica H. Tran
Heed Resident Retreat

Personal Statement

My first exposure to academic medicine was during a summer college internship at Massachusetts General Hospital, where I was drawn to the integration of clinical care, research, and education within the collaborative, dynamic environment. This experience shaped my approach to medical training, pushing me to seek opportunities aligned with academic medicine. Now an ophthalmology resident, I hope to pursue an academic career in glaucoma focused on screening and outcomes research, along with patient care and medical education. The Heed Resident Retreat would provide insight into how to build such a career by learning from faculty who have successfully integrated these roles.

My research experiences and training in study design and data analysis have provided a strong foundation for a career in health services research in academic ophthalmology. During medical school at Mount Sinai, I was competitively selected for a tuition-free Master's in Clinical Research, which strengthened my skills in research appraisal and quantitative methods. This training developed my ability to think rigorously about clinical questions and translate them into structured research projects, resulting in several first-author publications. My interest in health services research stems from working with underserved populations, and my perspective that they can uncover disparities to directly inform patient care. As a future physician-scientist, I envision having at least 25% full-time equivalent dedicated to research. In this endeavor, I recognize that securing grants will be essential to fund this work. The Heed Resident Retreat would help me learn how early-career faculty navigated this process to build sustainable research investigations.

In addition to my interests in clinical care and research, I have developed a strong commitment to medical education and mentorship that I intend to continue in my career. In medical school, I led curriculum reforms integrating ophthalmology into the pediatric clerkship, served as chief of the ophthalmology student-run free clinic, and co-created a preclinical ophthalmology elective. As a resident, I have continued engaging in medical education through department committees focused on improving ophthalmic teaching for other clinical departments and strengthening patient care pathways in the emergency setting. These experiences have solidified my interest in academic leadership in education, with the long-term goal of serving as a residency or fellowship program director in academic ophthalmology where I can directly engage with trainees and help mentor the next generation. However, I realize that there are many pathways within educational leadership in ophthalmology at both an institutional, national, and global level, and I am eager to learn more about the range of roles I can pursue within medical education. The Heed Resident Retreat would provide an opportunity to gain perspective from faculty in these different positions and better understand how they have shaped their careers.

Following glaucoma fellowship, I hope to build a career in academic ophthalmology as a physician-scientist and educator, integrating health services research focused on improving glaucoma outcomes with clinical care and medical education. Through this path, I aim to contribute not only to advancing understanding of glaucoma but also to the training and mentorship of future ophthalmologists. The Heed Resident Retreat offers a unique opportunity to learn from faculty who have successfully built such careers and gain insight into how to develop the skills, mentorship, and trajectory necessary to pursue a fulfilling, productive academic career.