

## **Personal Statement for Heed Resident Retreat**

**Jo-Hsuan Wu, PGY-2, NYP-Columbia**

During residency interviews, I was often asked these questions, “Why did you come to the US? What do you want to achieve?” My response remains the same today, “I want to make an impact. I want to become part of the forefront of ophthalmology.” This motivation has driven me to seize any opportunity that would help me grow. It is also the reason that makes me eager to participate in the Heed resident retreat, which represents a precious opportunity to engage with a community that reflects my aspirations in academic ophthalmology.

From vision-related research in high school/medical school to a glaucoma research fellowship, this journey from Taiwan to US reflects my commitment to a future academic career at a global stage. Besides article publications, the exposure to cutting-edge discovery and guidance from excellent clinician scientists have deepened my academic interest. As I developed research skillsets, I was given the responsibilities to supervise projects and guide team members, through which I could emulate the role of an independent investigator and research leader. The subsequent transition from research fellowship to residency training also reflects my determination to apply scientific discovery to patient care and contribute both clinically and academically. Despite the demands of residency, I remain involved in vision science through research conduction and peer review, motivated by genuine academic passion and curiosity.

Building upon these experiences, I am particularly excited about the retreat as a space to connect with like-minded peers and learn from established faculty. The retreat’s focus on introducing academic career pathways and facilitating trainee-faculty conversations will provide valuable insights on what an academic career in ophthalmology truly is and how to navigate the transition from trainee to independent investigator. I also wish to obtain guidance on building a fulfilling career that incorporates leadership and teaching roles. Having met multiple mentors who were part of the Heed legacy and led with generosity and intention, I am convinced this retreat will help me grow to become not just an academic leader, but also the supportive and kind mentor I aspire to be.

To summarize, I am committed to a career in ophthalmology as a clinician scientist who advances vision science, translates new knowledge into patient practice, and contributes to a culture of mentorship and innovation. The mission of the Heed retreat aligns with my career goals, and I believe this experience would provide invaluable exposure to collaboration, mentorship, and real-world insights that will better position me to build such a career and contribute to the field in future. As can be shown through every step I have taken on this journey, I have also been building the acumen and mindset that will allow me to best leverage this opportunity.

With these thoughts, I would be grateful for the opportunity to be considered for the Heed resident retreat.