

April 20, 2026

Re: Yujia Zhou

Dear Society of Heed Fellows Trustees:

It is my absolute pleasure to write a letter of recommendation for Yujia Zhou as an applicant to the Heed Resident Retreat. I am a vitreoretinal surgeon and Program Director at the University of Florida, and I have had the opportunity to work with Yujia in both clinical and research settings. He is a thoughtful, intellectually curious physician with a strong foundation in research and a clear commitment to an academic career. His stated goal of becoming an academic, hospital-based neuro-ophthalmologist reflects his genuine passion for treating complex patients and helping develop future treatment paradigms for an underserved population. I am confident he would both contribute to and benefit from the collaborative environment and mentorship your retreat provides.

Yujia demonstrates exceptional research potential, with a body of work that reflects both productivity and intellectual range. His scholarship spans neuro-ophthalmology, ocular trauma, and immunology, with multiple peer-reviewed publications and ongoing projects that position him well for a career in academic medicine. He has contributed meaningfully to studies on open globe injury prognosis, endophthalmitis, and ocular microbiome dynamics, while also engaging in multicenter and translational efforts. In addition, he has a strong background in programming and has invested hundreds of hours developing open-source tools to better quantify visual field data. This ongoing project has significant potential to help synthesize information from kinetic and static perimetry and serves as an example of how he is motivated by addressing unmet knowledge gaps in our field.

Most impressively, he has maintained a high level of research productivity during a demanding clinical and surgical residency. In clinic, he is an extremely kind and caring physician, and patient feedback reflects his dedication to compassionate care. Among his peers, he has gained a reputation for taking on the most complex patients, and when the hospital was on emergency coverage during a hurricane, he volunteered to remain in-house. Surgically, although he has not yet completed his second year of ophthalmology training, he has already met all of his case requirements for graduation. It is a true reflection of his dedication that he has remained so productive without protected research time.

As an educator, Yujia brings a thoughtful and patient approach. He has mentored multiple medical students on research projects and is always willing to assist others with data analysis. As he has advanced in his training, he has become increasingly active in teaching medical students and

junior residents. He is particularly effective at breaking down complex concepts into understandable components, and I plan to nominate him to our university's Society of Teaching Scholars next year. More broadly, his career vision reflects a commitment to education; he clearly sees his career as one that not only advances knowledge but also prepares the next generation to contribute meaningfully to the field.

Finally, he is a candidate who will truly thrive when exposed to a broader network of mentors and leaders, as this program provides. He is deeply thoughtful and proactively seeks guidance on developing interpersonal and leadership skills. With continued mentorship, I am confident he will develop into a highly effective and inspiring leader.

In summary, I give Yujia my strongest recommendation. He brings a combination of intellectual depth, research drive, compassionate care, and a genuine commitment to growth that makes him an excellent candidate for your program. His aspiration to serve as a versatile ophthalmic hospitalist—one who contributes to patient care, advances knowledge, and mentors others—speaks to a long-term vision that aligns closely with the mission of academic ophthalmology.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is any further information I can offer to support his application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Hu', written in a cursive style.

Jonathan Hu  
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