Heed Retreat Personal Statement
Haroon Rasheed, MD

My career goal is to become an academic retina specialist whose work spans three interconnected domains: clinical education, translational research, and the integration of emerging technologies into ophthalmic practice.

The decision to pursue retina fellowship stems from a natural love for the intellectual complexity of the field, a deep appreciation for the surgical expertise, and an intellectual conviction that retina is uniquely positioned to deliver new therapies to the eye. This third pillar is validated by the invention of gene therapies, novel long-term cellular factor delivery platforms, and advances in intravitreal therapy. I want to be a part of translating these novel technologies into everyday clinical practice for ophthalmologist. It is also the subspecialty where I believe my background in AI and imaging quantification can have the most immediate relevance.

Teaching has been a parallel commitment throughout my training, and I intend for it to remain central to my career. My experience developing educational content for EyeGuru and Eyes on Eyecare, presenting at subspecialty case conferences, and studying how residents engage with emerging AI tools has reinforced my belief that teaching is to pay forward and pave the way for the next generation. Particularly in retina, this is very clear: the complexity that integrates physiology, pathology, and pharmacology can be enormously difficult to parse without guidance. I hope to continue developing educational materials and to contribute to the training of residents and fellows in my future career.

My research agenda will focus on the validation and clinical translation of novel technologies, with particular emphasis on AI and pharmacologic innovation in retinal disease. The work I have pursued thus far — from building deep learning systems for optic disc grading to analyzing IOP risk profiles in Phase 3 corticosteroid implant trials — will provide the stepping stones to my future research career. I hope to continue evolving my own research interests as AI continues to flourish and to partner with cutting-edge industry partners in designing new therapeutic tools.

Ultimately, I am drawn to a career in which the clinic, the classroom, and the research environment are not separate commitments but instead are uniquely intertwined. I find that this is most uniquely present in an academic environment.