

USC Roski Eye Institute

Keck Medicine of USC

April 27, 2026

Re: Haroon Rasheed, MD (PGY3) – Heed Resident Retreat Nominee

Dear Heed Ophthalmic Foundation Selections Committee:

We (BJS and JMH) write this letter in enthusiastic support of Dr. Haroon Rasheed, one of our truly outstanding PGY3 ophthalmology residents and his candidacy for the Annual Heed Foundation Residents Retreat. We know Haroon well since he joined our program as an intern in June 2023 and can enthusiastically attest to his potential as not only a future academic ophthalmologist but **a future star in our field**.

Haroon's career trajectory is defined by a unique synthesis of clinical ophthalmology, bioengineering, and artificial intelligence. His academic foundation is exceptionally strong, having graduated *summa cum laude* in Bioengineering from UCLA before earning his medical degree there. His early contributions to the field are already significant; he was awarded a "Top 10 Invention of the Year" by the UCLA Technology Development Group for his work on **DDLSNet**, a deep learning system for grading glaucomatous damage that matched the performance of specialists.

During residency, Haroon has emerged as a prolific researcher and a dedicated educator:

- **Translational Research & AI:** He has built and validated multiple neural network pipelines, including **RimNet**, for automated optic disc analysis. His current work extends into the retinal space, where he is analyzing risk profiles for intraocular pressure elevation in Phase 3 corticosteroid trials and comparing the performance of large language models like Gemini 3 Pro on board-style questions.
- **Commitment to Education:** Haroon views teaching as a "parallel commitment" to his clinical work. He has reached a wide audience by scripting and narrating highly utilized educational videos for *EyeGuru* and authoring articles for *Eyes on EyeCare* that have garnered over 12,000 views.
- **Leadership and Service:** His leadership is perhaps best exemplified by his role as Co-Founder and Director of **LA Covid Volunteers**. This 501(c)(3) nonprofit, which recruited 1,000 volunteers and produced 60,000 face shields, was formally recognized by the Biden Administration for its service.

Haroon's goal is to become an academic retina specialist who bridges the gap between emerging technologies and everyday clinical practice. He possesses the rare ability to not only develop complex algorithms but also to translate those findings into peer-reviewed literature and digestible educational content for his peers. His background in AI and imaging quantification is particularly relevant to the future of retina, a field he is drawn to for its intellectual and surgical complexity.

Haroon is a "triple threat" in every sense of the word. He is already **a skilled clinician, a productive scholar, and an enthusiastic educator and mentor** to our younger residents and students. At a time when the calling of medicine seems to be viewed differently from the past, Haroon consistently demonstrates "old school values" and a refreshing growth mindset. We give Haroon our highest recommendation - He represents the next

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generation of academic ophthalmologists who will drive innovation through technology and mentorship.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to either of us should you have any questions (brian.song@med.usc.edu or heur@med.usc.edu). Haroon has waived her right to review this letter.

Sincerely,



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