Professor Rick Hoyle
Department of Psychology and Neuroscience

Professor Rick Hoyle is the 2017 recipient of the Algernon Sydney Sullivan award from Duke University. This award seeks to perpetuate the excellence of character and humanitarian service of Algernon Sydney Sullivan by recognizing and honoring such qualities in others.

Professor Hoyle has been a selfless contributor to Duke, a steadfast leader in his faith and local communities, and a devoted servant to the betterment of the world at large. His energy in every domain of life is frankly inspiring. He continually takes on new challenges for the greater good, sacrificing his own time to assist others. And, he excels in all of these areas while continually directing credit and recognition to others. He is someone who is easy to admire – not just because of his brilliance or research excellence, but because he is simply an extraordinary person.

Professor Hoyle is selfless. Last academic year the department needed strong leadership in one of the most important administrative roles: Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) for the Psychology major (one of the largest at Duke). By serving as the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Hoyle did considerable good for students by strengthening their major and improving their Duke experience. He has evidenced strong, compassionate, and selfless leadership as DUS.

Professor Hoyle serves others generously and thoughtfully. Unsurprisingly, Professor Hoyle’s research has direct benefit for society. His longstanding interests have been in understanding the structure of personality characteristics, with a particular focus on how certain traits can make people resilient in the face of hardship. Professor Hoyle could be a leading scholar doing any kind of psychological research – but he’s chosen to do research that matters.

Professor Hoyle exhibits a nobility of character that places others before himself. During a spring break, he worked in Haiti on a construction site to help victims of that country’s devastating earthquake. Recent service trips to Haiti, Cuba, Pennsylvania, and other sites provide examples of his commitment to helping others – he devotes his time, energy and resources to improve others’ lives, not just his own life and career.
**Professor Hoyle demonstrates integrity as a role model for others.** Professor Hoyle is unfailingly respectful, considerate, and ethical in all of his interactions – whether with a senior faculty colleague, with a staff member under his supervision, or with a first-year undergraduate who is still trying to find her way around Duke.

**Professor Hoyle exemplifies his spiritual commitment through deep service to his community and faith.** Professor Hoyle’s leadership has been a stabilizing factor for his home congregation at Greenwood Forest Baptist Church, where he has served in a variety of lay leader roles. Consistent with his personality, Professor Hoyle leads in a way that puts others first. His current pastor, Rev. Lauren Efird describes him as a “steady and dedicated church member who is particularly gifted at leading our congregation in a way that moves us forward and yet helps to bring most of us along.” While his visits to Cuba, Haiti, and other distant places might attract the most attention, his quiet leadership in his local community will have long-lasting consequences.

In summary, Professor Hoyle is greatly admired by his colleagues and students. His nominator and the department can think of no one more deserving of recognition. There are few, if any, who equal his commitment to living an ethical, other-regarding, and spiritual life. Professor Hoyle demonstrates every quality sought in the Sullivan Award – most notably, his continual efforts to make Duke (and our world) a better place.