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The LEAPS GK-12 Program ELISABETH GWINN, Physics Dept.,
UCSB, FIONA GOODCHILD, WENDY IBSEN, Calornia Nanosystems Institute,
UCSB, MARILYN GARZA, Santa Barbara Junior High School — The NSF-funded
GK-12 program at UCSB, “Let’s Explore Applied Physical Science” (LEAPS),
awards full fellowships to competitively selected graduate students in the physical
sciences and engineering, to support their engagement in local 8th and 9th grade
science classrooms. The Fellows’ responsibilities to LEAPS total 15 hours per week
during the school year. They join consistently in the same classes to collaborate
with teachers on delivery of discovery-oriented science instruction. Fellows work in
3-member, interdisciplinary teams. They benefit from this team approach through
interaction with colleagues in other disciplines, validation from peers who share enthu-
siasm for science and mentoring, increased leadership and teaching skills, and a
research safety net provided by teammates who can pick up the slack when one Fel-
low’s research requires undivided attention. For teachers, the disciplinary breadth of
the Fellow teams is an enormous asset in covering the broad physical science curricu-

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