

Abstract Submitted
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The LEAPS GK-12 Program ELISABETH GWINN, Physics Dept., UCSB, FIONA GOODCHILD, WENDY IBSEN, Calicornia 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 enthusiasm 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 Fellow’s research requires undivided attention. For teachers, the disciplinary breadth of the Fellow teams is an enormous asset in covering the broad physical science curriculum in CA. Students benefit from hands-on labs and small-group problem-solving exercises enabled by the Fellows’ presence and from mentoring by these young scientists.

Elisabeth Gwinn
Physics Dept., UCSB

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