Program Data for LEAPS

The LEAPS program data has been collected through surveying and interviewing K-12 students and Fellows.

K-12 student attitudes
The students express that what they value most about the LEAPS program is that there are more people available to help them. They enjoy the days when the Fellows are there because they know they will be able to ask a lot of questions. They recognize that they get more attention when the Fellows are present in the classroom. The students also say that if they do not understand the explanation they are given, they simply ask someone else. This is strong evidence that the presence of the Fellows encourages students to be more inquisitive. Students in LEAPS also report in the interviews that the Fellows have helped them become more interested in studying science, and more motivated to do well in science. The interviews reveal that there is a good relationship between the Fellows and the students, where the students respect the Fellows and see them as role models.

K-12 Schools & UCSB
In LEAPS-sponsored evening school events to date, family members of one hundred and five K-12 students have attended.

In LEAPS-sponsored events to date, roughly 26 volunteer (non-LEAPS) graduate students have participated. This includes participants in science fair project mentoring.

GK-12 Fellows
Analysis of Fellows' focus group interviews (June 2007)
The interviews with the 2006-2007 graduate Fellows were conducted at the end of the school year. Overall, the Fellows were content with their experience. The topics most elaborately discussed by the Fellows were:

1. Why they were initially interested in being a LEAPS Fellow.
2. The value of the LEAPS program.
3. How they balanced school and research with being a Fellow.
4. What they learned from the students.

Why they were initially interested in being a LEAPS Fellow
Many Fellows expressed an interest in teaching is what motivated them to apply to LEAPS. They felt that being a Fellow would be more fun than being a TA, and that it would help them improve their teaching skills. The Fellows also expressed that the thought of doing something off campus away from their labs but that was related to science was enticing.

The value of the LEAPS program
The Fellows expressed that the teachers and program staff brought invaluable knowledge and experience to the program that they were able to benefit from. The Fellows also felt that the one-on-one time they were able to dedicate to students was extremely valuable, and something they admit was generally not part of their education. They felt that the
students also benefit because they bring in their research and technology to the classroom and expose the students to new ideas. Additionally, the students are able to do more labs and experiments that they may not get to do with only one teacher in the classroom.

How they balanced school and research with being a Fellow
All the Fellows agreed it was very challenging to balance everything. Time management was their number one challenge. Some weeks were more intense than others, but the Fellows expected that. They did admit that they were not able to advance as much on their research while they were a Fellow, in part because of the time commitment to LEAPS, but also because it was often hard to find enough time to monitor the experiments in their own labs. When asked if they would do LEAPS again, most Fellows said no because they know if they did their research would suffer, and they would get very behind in their work. The Fellows were in agreement that the experience they gained from LEAPS was worth a setback to their research, though some stated upon reflection that they would rather have been a Fellow during a year where they did not have as many outside commitments.

What they learned from the students
The Fellows said that they learned a lot of important lessons from the students. They learned to always be positive, because showing that you are frustrated or in a panic just leads to chaos. It is also important to always be patient with the students, and to speak to them with confidence. They have also learned not to judge the students based on their actions. Each day is a new day, a student who was difficult and uninterested one day may be very respectful and engaged the next day. Thus, the Fellows should let go of any bad days in order to enjoy the good days. They also found out that students do not always behave the same in groups as they do individually. Students who may cause problems in a group setting because they are trying to present a certain image to the group can be very well-behaved when approached by themselves.