It’s a problem in nearly every classroom: students spend class time checking their e-mail on their phones or laptops. Now, some undergraduates must use similar technology to prove that they are actually paying attention. In William White’s Organizational Behavior class, each student has a clicker that is used to register attendance, take quizzes, and answer questions posed by White, a professor of industrial engineering and management science. “They should walk in with them in their hands, on time, ready to go,” he said in a November New York Times article about the clickers (www.nytimes.com/2010/11/16/education/16clickers.html).

White is one of three dozen professors across the University who use the technology. The article says, “The greatest impact of such devices—which more than a half-million students are using this fall on several thousand college campuses—may be cultural: they have altered, perhaps irrevocably, the nap schedules of anyone who might have hoped to catch a few winks in the back row and made it harder for them to respond to text messages, e-mail, and other distractions.”

Wisconsin Public Radio and NBC Chicago also reported on this story.

The February issue of Fast Company, a business magazine that focuses on innovation in technology, leadership, and design, included an article profiling Samuel Stupp, Board of Trustees Professor of Materials Science and Engineering, Chemistry, and Medicine and director of the Institute for Bionanotechnology in Medicine. The article, “How Samuel Stupp Is Rebuilding Your Body, One Molecule at a Time,” concerned Stupp’s innovations in regenerative medicine. It featured comments by Ramille Shah, assistant professor of materials science and engineering and orthopaedic surgery, and Monica Olvera de la Cruz, professor of materials science and engineering and chemical and biological engineering. See www.fastcompany.com/magazine/152/molecular-healing.html.

As the world attempted to understand the nuclear crisis following the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan, the media frequently turned to Elmer Lewis, professor emeritus of mechanical engineering. He was cited in reports in the Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times, the Christian Science Monitor, MSNBC, and hundreds of other outlets.

Lewis is the author of the textbooks Nuclear Power Reactor Safety and Fundamentals of Nuclear Reactor Physics, among other publications. His research has focused on the broad problems of dealing with the physics, safety, and reliability of nuclear systems as well as computational methods for neutron transport.

“The combination of an earthquake of unprecedented intensity followed immediately by a tsunami of historic proportions in Japan has resulted in the most serious nuclear reactor accidents in decades,” Lewis said.

“Understandably, the uncertainty associated with the further progression of the partial melting of the reactor cores has engendered a great deal of psychological trauma as well as media attention. However, it appears that loss of life to the public—if any—caused by the radiation releases from these accidents will be minuscule when compared with the thousands of deaths caused by the earthquake and tsunami.”

Lewis also reassured Americans concerned about radiation exposure: “I think it’s exceedingly improbable—I’d say impossible—that this accident would deliver any detectable amount of radiation at ground level in the United States.”

From IBM’s Ginni Rometty to composer Tod Machover to SpaceX president Gwynne Shotwell, McCormick has had a year full of great speakers. You can view events such as the Dean’s Seminar Series online at http://video.mccormick.northwestern.edu.