water is the cleaner way to drink water, but what consumers don’t know about are all the chemicals hidden within a water bottle.” There is definitely something in the water that should be brought to everyone’s attention. Not only for our own sake, but also for the health of organisms with whom we share the Earth.

So where exactly will this revolutionary kinetic sculpture be taken and how does the sculpture pertain to both a race and an INDS course? The Kinetic Sculpture Project is an applied learning INDS 430 course where students from various disciplines collaborate with the community and each other to design, build, and race a kinetic sculpture.

With the students partaking in the course, the disciplines couldn’t be more spread out- ranging from costume design, to digital media, to researching, the KSR Team is unstoppable. The goal of the class is to enter a kinetic sculpture that they’ve worked on for two semesters into the 2015 Kinetic Sculpture Race held here in Baltimore, MD. The race, sponsored and hosted by the American Visionary Art Museum, was held on Saturday, May 2nd. The race brings the community together by encouraging different teams to support one another by collaborating on what works and what doesn’t. Taught and mentored by Assistant Director and Professor of INDS, Steven McAlpine, the students must make sure the human-powered vehicle is created and prepared to overcome various types of obstacles such as sand, mud, and water. The class embodies project-based learning that will serve as a model for the development of future applied learning experiences at UMBC. As Markus Proctor, who works on the high level organizational aspect of the class, says, “KSR represents the future of education. The class fosters active participants with their many talents and backgrounds.” Jack Neumieier, whose lead role is in digital media as well as partnerships, grants, and proposals on and off campus, further discusses the concept of higher education in an applied learning course like KSR.

“We believe that universities today have to become a place of collaboration, so we have to think of just how to re-imagine the typical college set up for classes and stray away from the ‘job training factories’ they’ve become. Unfortunately, there is a gap in colleges between life in the classrooms and real life when they should be the same. Classes like KSR exist to develop and apply what is meant by project-based learning, applied learning, and competency learning. All three of these disciplines are required from this class in order to get the job done, and more importantly, reflect the real world and what is expected from the work field.”

The KSR team wants the Kraken to be something more than a kinetic sculpture entered in a race. They want the piece of art to break communication barriers and make a statement to the UMBC campus by spreading awareness of the new monster.

Unanimously, all of the students and volunteers involved with KSR have described their experience like no other. With this kind of project-based learning course, the sky’s the limit. When I asked one of the students, Stephen Moore, what KSR meant to him, he raved about how “it is as far from a class as I’ve ever taken; it felt more like a club. Seeing everyone on building days get excited about their new diagrams and designs, and their reactions- that sort of collective achievement from a team is something you can’t get from other classes. It makes you feel like you’re making an impact.” Andres Camacho, a principal leader in the digital media platform of the class, relates to Moore’s love for the class, “With a course like this that fills a room with all kinds of different people, your ideas and talents come into existence. Materials you can always get, but you’re getting something accomplished people-wise by applying multiple perspectives to a project, instead of being stuck with one,” Camacho said. Heather Mortimer, whose interest is in ocean conservation, adds onto Camacho’s statement, “For once in a class, I am able to apply my passion onto a project.” It is clear that the strong relationships and bonds the students have created with each other wouldn’t have been possible without the class. Not just the students, but the professor himself, Steven McAlpine, has also made unforgettable memories. McAlpine dumpster-dived to fish out the metal framings of the platoons that the team is using as their flotation system! The class is definitely not something you typically see here at UMBC that would work on a project as unique as KSR.

Thanks to the funding of the Breaking Ground grant for bringing the Kraken alive as well as its co-sponsors: the Interdisciplinary Studies Department, Mechanical Engineering Department, The Baja Team, Visual Arts Department, Geography and Environmental Systems Department, The Honors College, The Shriver Center, The English Language Institute, UMBC Transit, The Hub/ Catonsville Bikes, and the Chesapeake Arts Center. The team also received vital contributions from the Home Depot Lansdowne in Halethorpe, Maryland. We hope you had the opportunity on Saturday, May 2, to support our Kinetic Sculpture Race Team that has worked very hard to bring the breath-taking Kraken to life. They certainly made the UMBC community proud.