

# UDC debuts sustainable-energy center

By VICTORIA SOLOMON

Current Staff Writer

The University of the District of Columbia on Friday unveiled a towering and rotating creation crafted by engineering students over the past few months.

Atop a hill on the boxy campus near the soccer field are a photovoltaic solar system and wind turbine combination system, soaking in the rays, whipping in the wind and turning those natural elements into power.

The devices are part and parcel of a new program within the university, the Center of Excellence for Renewable Energy. The center will host a combination of civil, electrical and mechanical engineering under the school's Engineering and Applied Sciences program.

The solar system and wind turbine will be used exclusively for research and lab purposes for students and faculty at the Center, according to Samuel Lakeou, chair of the electrical engineering department.

Lakeou, who helped construct the systems with financial assistance from BP Solar, said the study of renewable energy is something many students are interested in. The combination system was handled entirely by students with help from faculty members, he said.

In future programs within the center, Lakeou said students will continue "to learn how to put together a solar system and a wind-energy system and a combination of the two."

The university is using the center to build a connection between renewable energy and sustainable international development, which administrators



Victoria Solomon/The Current

**UDC senior George Karanja explains the engineering how-to of the new solar energy system.**

describe as a good fit on a campus with students from more than 100 countries.

Students who have studied research and engineering at the center will use the knowledge to promote sustainable energy in international development, Lakeou said.

The connection of renewable energy and sustainable international development to the university's new center was showcased through an international conference held last week and organized by the university.

The conference was the first of its kind to be held in D.C. and attracted renewable energy experts and scientists from around the globe. The final session was held at the university's campus for the inaugu-

See UDC/Page 32

## UDC

From Page 4

ration of the center.

During the inauguration, engineering and applied sciences dean Ben O. Latigo thanked the international participants as well as students in the audience. "It's a source of pride for the university that you can attend this event," he said of the center's inauguration.

Latigo said some students had stayed up late into the night working under the distant lights of the soccer field to put final touches on the solar- and wind-power system. "Happily, we completed the task," he said.

Engineering student Donnell Harris, a junior who worked on con-

struction of the renewable energy devices, said she felt more excited each day of work. "I've been telling my mother every day, 'Oh, my god, we're going to be part of history,'" Harris said. She said to see the solar system and wind turbine up and running and celebrated by the university, the city and scientists from around the globe was "even better."

D.C. Energy Office director Charles Clinton said the mayor and the office welcome the conference participants and the work the university is doing to teach renewable energy engineering principles. He also hinted that the university is likely to receive grant funding as a Renewable Energy Demonstration Project. He could not give detailed information because the list of awardees has not been finalized.