

## ***Know Your Rights: A Seminar with Darryl Parker***

The University of Washington's Black Student Union invited Attorney Darryl Parker to give a presentation during one of their weekly meetings. He chose to educate this student club on their rights in order to protect themselves and to combat oppression.

Mr. Parker began his presentation by reviewing a timeline, beginning from the inception of slavery, and going through the Jim Crow era, up until the start of the Civil Rights Movement. He reiterated how important it is to understand where laws come from because historical events greatly impact the creation of laws and how they are implemented in practice.

The Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution can be violated in twelve different ways. With this new knowledge of what the Fourth Amendment protects and how it can be violated, Mr. Parker began his



*Attorney Parker explains a car arrest scenario and invites students to share their ideas on improper police tactics (photo by Martha Girma)*

discussion of the Fourth Amendment and traffic stops. He played the video of Sandra Bland's traffic stop and arrest. Ms. Bland is a 28-year old black woman who was found hung in her cell after being arrested at a traffic stop three days prior, on July 13, 2015. Recently, video footage of the stop recorded from her cellphone was made public. In the video, Ms. Bland was pulled over for failing to signal. The officer asked her to exit her vehicle and she refused. Mr. Parker explained that an officer can demand you to exit your car and if you do not comply, you are obstructing the officer. He differentiated this request with that of a search. An individual does not have to consent to a search unless the officer has a warrant or probable cause.

Mr. Parker then gave students the opportunity to apply their knowledge of the Fourth Amendment and one's rights at a traffic stop by presenting a fact pattern. Students assessed a traffic stop and volunteered their ideas about the rights of that individual and how an officer violated those rights.

"Being a lawyer gives you power," stated Mr. Parker as he wraps up his seminar. He reiterated how important it is to understand your rights, especially when interacting with law enforcement. "Knowing your rights allows you to protect yourself." Standing up for your rights is important, however, it is critical to cooperate with officers when it is necessary to avoid escalation.