SB 364 – RELATING TO TOURISM

Chairs Wakai, Kim, and Kahele, Vice Chairs Taniguchi, Kidani and Keith-Agaran, and members of the committees:

The University of Hawai‘i is sympathetic to many of the elements of this bill. In particular, the interest in emphasizing management of Hawai‘i’s resources as opposed to solely marketing resources is laudable, although marketing remains an important part of any kind of tourism. In addition, professional certifications are often valuable to meet industry standards, to ensure safety, and to address liability issues, so this also seems positive. The University has experience in these areas since UH must respond to many outside accreditation agencies, such as engineering, and other agencies that establish industry standards nationally or internationally. It is also important to note that Kapi‘olani Community College already has a Certification for Hawaii’s Professional Guides:


The proposed measure requires any tour company that has a commercial use permit in state parks, boat harbors, and ocean recreational areas to have UH certify one-third of their staff that have direct contact with visitors as professional tour guides. This suggests an unknown impact on our campuses and, in addition, the potential regulatory implications would need to be assessed for impact on college resources. Close coordination with other agencies such as DNLR and the Aha Moku Advisory Committee as put forward in the bill seems to require more assessment regarding what this engagement would entail.

In sum, there seem to be several unknowns concerning unclear impacts on a campus or multiple campuses, as well as unknown obligations and requirements to collaborate properly with external agencies such as DLNR. Therefore, it appears these issues warrant further study, assessment, and clarification. The University would be happy to be part of further investigation regarding the vision suggested by the bill.