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NAU Campus Dining Piloting *USEFULL* Program to Eliminate Plastic Waste, Funded by The Green Fund

NAU Campus Dining will make the switch from single use plastics to a mandatory reusable container program called USEFULL in order to reduce waste from single use plastics. The change will begin on March 18 after students return from spring break and the program will pilot at Cobrizo, Turnip the Greens, and Lemon Grass dining locations. The Green Fund is providing funding for this pilot program in order to make NAU more sustainable.

Campus Dining has been using the O2Go program since 2017 in an effort to mitigate single use plastic waste. However, the program costed $5 to join and required students to opt-in; it was not mandatory. Because of this, O2Go fell out of use around 2020. So, Campus Dining and the Green Fund came together to find a better solution– USEFULL.

USEFULL is a mandatory program at the dining locations that utilize it. The system works like a library checkout– users receive their food in a stainless steel container and have to return it within two days. In its one year pilot, the program will save over 25,000 pounds of single use plastic from the landfill. NAU's climate action plan outlines a goal of being carbon neutral by 2030, and reducing plastic use will help. Creating a culture of sustainability is another part of the climate action plan, which USEFULL will help create by allowing individual students to reduce their plastic waste.

"Quote"

The pilot of USEFULL will last a year– beginning in March 2024 and ending in ____. Cobrizo, Turnip the Greens and Lemon Grass will utilize USEFULL during this time, and possibly expand to more, potentially all, campus dining locations once the pilot is complete. Students, and those who eat at these locations, will be required to download the USEFULL app which will give them

reminders to return their container as well as show them the school's total plastic savings and their individual part in that.

The NAU Green Fund was founded in 2010 and is comprised of eight students in addition to faculty and staff members who vote to fund projects and research using the $15 per student per semester Green Fee. All of the Green Fund's meetings are open to the public and any student, staff or faculty member can submit a proposal.