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The grant was awarded by the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation to the Institute of Engineering and Medicine (IEM.) The Institute is the collaborative effort of Professor Neil Armstrong, Director of IEM and University Professor of Aerospace Engineering; Dr. George Rieveschl, UC Vice President of Special Projects; Dr. Henry J. Heimlich, Director of Surgery at Jewish Hospital in Cincinnati, and Dr. Edward A. Patrick, Professor of Electrical Engineering at Purdue University.

The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation was incorporated in 1944 by the late Mr. and Mrs. Michael L. Benedum as a memorial to their only son who died in World War I. The Foundation's resources in recent years have been committed to a broad variety of charitable causes with priority given to needs of people in West Virginia, the Benedum family's native state.

While interests of the Foundation have been essentially regional, other projects and programs have been supported which Foundation directors feel will substantially benefit people of the tri-state area.
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The Foundation statement noted that "chronic lung diseases suffered by coal miners and industrial workers in Appalachia are a cause for serious concern...The Foundation in its work both in Pittsburgh and West Virginia is particularly conscious of the sociological problems, at the family and community levels, which are the broader impact of these dread diseases."

Development of artificial devices for the improvement of treatment for respiratory and cardiovascular disorders is a major goal of IEM.