URL: https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/leadership-means-talent-management

Stanford University President Marc Tessier-Lavigne discusses the similarities between leading large organizations in the private sector and in higher education. Whether at biopharmaceutical giant Genentech, where he was executive vice president for research, or in the academic setting, he says the job boils down to talent management – hiring great people and enabling them to do their best work.

Transcript

- It's all about talent management.. It's about hiring great people and enabling them to do their work.. That's true in the private sector, it's true in the academic sector, and that's the role of leadership, first and foremost, is to hire great people, enable them to do their work, and yes, also hold them accountable, right? So that's what we do.. So in that sense, it's very similar.. In other ways, it's very different.. At Genentech, it is a hierarchy, right? So, I was the boss of 1400 people.. At Standford, there are 2200 faculty, but that means I have 2200 bosses, right? It's not that I'm the boss of 2200.. But in the end.... So, in a sense, in the private sector, we would discuss things and I could at the end of the day say, "You know what, "I've heard you all but we're just gonna do it this way." You would never do that, right? People who are great don't wanna work for someone who will just be autocratic like that.. So in fact, the management style's not that different..

If you strive to hire great people, who you want to empower and you want them to be independent and function as a team, you have to treat them the same way you would treat faculty, which is to say, "You're the boss, I'm gonna enable you "to do your best work.. "Yeah, we're a team, and yes I do "have the final word if it's necessary." But you never want to do that...