

Leander “Russ” McDonald, PhD, is an enrolled member of the Spirit Lake Dakota Nation and a proud descendant of the Sahnish and Hidatsa Nations. Dr. McDonald has worked in higher education for over 17 years as a researcher and administrator. He has served as the President of United Tribes Technical College for the past three years and previously served as Chairman for the Spirit Lake Nation. Past positions include the Vice President of Academic Affairs for Cankdeska Cikana Community College and Assistant Professor at the Center for Rural Health at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Much of his published research is focused on Native elders’ health risk and disparities, American Indian veterans’ access to healthcare, and American Indians behavior risk factors. During his tenure as the Spirit Lake Chairman, he provided three national testimonies in support of child protection legislation, disparities, and the resources necessary to bring parity to tribal systems. McDonald is a veteran of the U.S. Army. He resides in Bismarck, ND with his wife Francine, and their two grandchildren, Isis and Taylor.

