

Leander R. McDonald, PhD, is an enrolled member of the Spirit Lake Dakota Nation and a proud descendant of the Sahnish, Hidatsa, and Hunkpapa Nations. Dr. McDonald has served as the President of United Tribes Technical College for four years. He previously served as Chairman for the Spirit Lake Nation, 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.

Russ's higher education training began at his tribe's tribal college and university, Cankdeska Cikana Community College, with an Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts in 1993. He earned another associate degree in Business Administration from the University of North Dakota (UND) Lake Region in 1997, followed by bachelors and master's degrees in Sociology from UND in 1998 and 2000. His PhD in Educational Foundations and Research, also from UND, was conferred in 2003.

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 U.S. Army veteran and resides in Bismarck, ND with his wife Francine.

